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THE ETERNAL SACRIFICE

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THE

ETERNAL SACRIFICE

BY

Charles De Condren.

SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

ORATORY OF JESUS.

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH

BY

A. J. MONTEITH

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Come, Lord Jesus, living in Mary, and live in this Thy servant, in the plentitude of Thy power; in the perfection of Thy ways; in the sanctity of Thy Spirit; in the truth of Thy virtues; in the communion of Thy mysteries; and by Thy Spirit overcome all hostile power, to the glory of the Father. Amen.

PRAYER OF PÈRE DE CONDREN AND M. OLIER.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

In spite of his eminent talents and distinguished position an extreme humility caused Père de Condren to write little and the Treatise of "L'Idée du Sacerdoce de Jésus Christ", which has been considered as one of the most profound and divinely enlightened works which have appeared on the subject, is really the embodiment of his teaching as committed to writting by his disciples. In this form, as found in Abbé Pin's "Oeuvres complètes du P. Charles de Condren", it was translated into English, and printed, chiefly for private circulation, in 1899; under the title of the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Of this the following pages are essentially a reprint; in which a few alterations have been made in the arrangement of the matter, repetitions retrenched and other literary defects, as far as possible, eliminated.

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INTRODUCTION

Père de Condren, one of the most distinguished ecclesiastics of his age and country is perhaps best known in England as having been the spiritual father and guide of the saintly M. Olier, Founder of the College of St Sulpice.

Born at Vaubuins in the diocese of Soissons on Dec. 15th 1588, he was early destined for a military career. In this his father's position as Governor of the Royal Castle of Monceaux, the favour of the King, Henri IV, and the talents and courage which marked his early years, held out every promise of future distinction. On the other hand a studious disposition and deeply religious mind inclined him towards the Church; but it seems probable that he would have conformed to his father's wish but for an extraordinary intimation of the Divine Will.

One day, when he was still a boy, being alone in his chamber engaged in reading and prayer, he saw himself surrounded by a light in which the designs of God were unfolded to him. He saw the depth and comprehensiveness of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which was to be, in after years, the subject of his most profound and luminous instructions: he understood at the same time, the meaning and value of a call to the priesthood, and resolved to correspond at all costs with the grace of this divine vocation. It was however, some time before he could obtain his parents' consent; and it was only when distress of mind had brought on an illness which threatened his life, that his father withdrew his opposition and allowed him to enter upon his theological studies at the Sorbonne.

An idea of the habitual recollection in which he lived, may be gathered from a general confession made about this time, and found accidentally by his sister, in which he notes the number of times he had lost the presence of God in the space of two years.

Once at college his father provided him with ample means which enabled him to collect an excellent library, and he applied himself with ardour to the study of the Fathers. Desiring one day with too much eagerness to obtain the clue

to some difficulty connected with the ineffable mystery of the Trinity, he felt himself restrained, as it were by an invisible hand, which made him sensible at once of his weakness and incapacity. It was henceforth by prayer that he sought for the lights he desired and these were granted him so abundantly that it seemed to him as though, — to use his own words, — God Himself drew aside the veil which hides the sanctuary and laid open to the gaze of his soul the Ark of the Covenant and the Propitiatory where He sits between the Cherubim. " From that moment ", he says, " all my perplexities vanished and I found no more darkness in questions of theology ".

How great the light was which flooded his soul may be gathered from the estimate of his disciple M. Olier, and of his biographer who says that perhaps no man ever penetrated more profoundly into the sublimest mysteries of the faith; while St. Jane Francis de Chantal, comparing him with St. Francis of Sales says, " It seemed to me that God had given our blessed Father to teach men, but that He had made Père de Condren fit to teach angels ".

Henceforth he lived for God alone and although subject to frequent illness and constant suffering, he never lost that bright serenity of soul and frankness of demeanour which endeared him to all.

Appointed Professor of Philosophy at the College of Plassis, and often unable from illness to compose his lectures, he would kneel down when the hour came, and pray thus: "O my God, on account of my sins I deserve more than anyone to be deprived of all light and intelligence, of every faculty and of my very existence; nevertheless Thou dost with the greatest mercy bestow these gifts upon me; I am an abyss of nothingness deeper than all darkness, yet Thou dost not cease to have compassion and to shed Thy beams upon me. O merciful Light! Thou dost enlighten unworthiness itself, and appointest me to teach Thy children. Cast on us a look compassion, and let us never be so blind as to attribute to ourselves the gifts which come from Thee, the sole principle of all good and of all intelligence; acknowledging Thy light and our own darkness". After this he would go and deliver his lecture extempore, — an effort which would have taxed the powers of some of the greatest philosophers after years of experience; and this at the early age of twenty five.

His life at this period was one of universal and constant self-denial. Kind and charitable to others, he grudged himself the smallest comforts; spending the winters, for example, without fire, although he suffered severely from the cold; and while his affectionate disposition and the unalterable

gentleness to which he had disciplined a naturally quick temper made him greatly beloved, he exacted of himself the most uncompromising detachment; and later in life, when much engaged in the direction of souls, it was his habit to examine himself specially every week upon this point. To one who expressed astonishment at his constant tranquility of soul he replied, that, by the grace of God, he feared nothing and desired nothing.

Not content with practising poverty by self-denial, he insisted on making a legal renunciation of his rights as eldest son; preferring to receive as an alms whatever his father chose to give him, and entreating him to consent to his living in evangelical poverty. This disinterestedness touched his father even to tears, and he saw that he must, indeed, make an entire surrender of this son whose heart was so entirely consecrated to the service of God.

Charles de Condren's love for the poor was unbounded; and being without the means of assisting them as liberally as before, he had recourse to his library, the contents of which he gradually diminished to supply their necessities; saying, that he might well impose a fast upon his intellectual curiosity but had no right to let Jesus Christ die of hunger in his members; and our Lord amply made up to him, by the com-

munication of extraordinary lights, for the books of which he had deprived himself for His sake. To others who represented that he would soon be destitute of the necessaries of life, he replied with his accustomed gaiety; "Since I have nothing, one of three things will happen; either men will, out of compassion, supply me with food, or God will nourish me without food, as He has done for those who have practised extraordinary abstinence, or He will let me die of hunger which I deserve for my sins".

In spite of dispositions which appeared to others as nearly perfect as human nature is capable of, his humility was so great that he would not consent to receive Holy Orders without devoting a whole year to special preparation. He spent it in the strictest retreat, and after his ordination employed three weeks more in preparation for saying his first Mass.

Being full of apostolic zeal he offered his services to the Bishop of Soissons hoping to be appointed to some country parish, which, as he afterwards told a friend, he would have regarded as a great honour. The Bishop however, unaware of his sentiments, and having nothing to offer which he considered worth the acceptance of a man of his distinction, left him without employment, and he returned to the Sorbonne without

making further efforts to obtain it; according to the maxim which was to him a rule of conduct, that when no opening offers for carrying out a new scheme, it is best to remain quietly in ones former state; serving God as perfectly as possible therein, until He makes a new obligation clearly manifest.

Père de Condren had, through life, the strongest affection and sympathy for the Religious Orders, and was especially attracted to that of the Chartereux, whose Rule he would undoubtedly have embraced had he not felt himself called to the service of his brethren. Cardinal de Berulle, Founder and first Superior General of the French Oratory, was well aware of his worth and obtained prayers in all directions that he might be inspired to join his Congregation. This indeed took place soon after, and the mutual sympathy and combined efforts of these two great men made the new Institute what it rapidly became, — a school of religious and apostolic virtues which sent forth zealous missioners over the length and breadth of France.

The life of this holy man was a continual prayer, and his constant aim, to efface himself that God might be all in all and to all, formed the keynote both of his method of government within the Congregation and of his direction of souls.

He never hesitated to keep his penitents waiting till he should receive from God, the lights necessary for their guidance; and was careful never to inspire anything of his own, saying that the character of director belonged to our Lord only, the Pastor of our souls. As priest he offered all his penitents to God, desiring, as victim, to be one sacrifice with them; but, as has been already said, in a spirit of perfect detachment which led him to prefer having but rare intercourse with those whom he directed.

An instance may be given of his patient and skilful treatment of the most incurable of all spiritual maladies.

A lady of education and piety who was tormented by scruples and had in vain consulted the most eminent ecclesiastics of the day, came to him for advice.

Instead of arguing with her, or trying to convict her of exaggeration, he willingly granted that the malice of sin is so great that is was indeed beyond her power to give a correct account of herself; that her contrition was, as she believed, very insufficient and not such as to entitle her to pardon, while the condition of our nature is such that we are forced to be content with the very inadequate accusation which alone words can convey, but that absolution, is a free

gift of God to whose mercy we have no right to set bounds.

By thus apparently entering into her views he won her confidence and soon succeeded in restoring calm to her soul. He had the consolation of witnessing her holy death; these striking words, which he never forgot, being her last, "I adore all that God is, and I separate myself from this present being, to retire into the infinite Being of God".

On the death of Cardinal de Berulle in 1629, Père de Condren was elected to succeed him as General of the Congregation; a dignity which he made every effort to escape, and only accepted in order to make himself more effectually the servant of all.

Having completed the Constitutions of the new Institute and presided at their first General Assembly, fully persuaded of his own incapacity he sent in his resignation with the most urgent prayer that it might be accepted. This however was unanimously refused, and he was compelled to remain in office till his death, which took place twelve years later, in 1641.

So entirely was he dead to nature and to self that no trial or suffering seemed sensibly to affect him; and this because he had resolved from his early youth to sacrifice himself wholly

as a true victim immolated with Jesus Christ. Thus he welcomed every suffering, and often said that what he found most wanting in life was persons who should crucify him. He would have desired every hour of his life to have some new sacrifice to make for the love of Jesus Crucified; and it pleased God to grant him no small share of the Cross, in the severest form of interior sufferings and acute physical pain. In the midst of all he never betrayed the least sign of impatience or discouragement, but his soul remained calm and peaceful in the darkness as in the light.

When he felt death approaching he begged to be buried in a cemetery where he might be forgotten by all, saying that, had he any hope of being listened to, he would express a very different desire, viz. that his body should be left on a gibbet by the public way, or stretched upon a wheel. "I should thus" he said "receive the honour due to me, and if, in life, I have been of no use to any one I should at least serve after my death to frighten the wicked." But one of the Fathers representing to him that, as the property of the congregation, he should leave to them the choice of his burial, he was silent.

His last hours were full of anguish. It seemed as though our Lord, whom he had so faithfully striven to imitate through life, permitted him to

taste with Him, in death, the bitterness of Calvary. One of the Fathers present recommending him to abandon himself to God, he replied in a loud voice, "I do abandon myself to Him", and so expired. His death took place on the 7th Jan. 1641.

We may conclude this short sketch of the life of Père de Condren by a few sentences which form his commentary on the last Gospel, in his the Explanation of the prayers of the Mass.

"This Gospel is as it were a supplement to the life of Jesus Christ. It has just been retraced in this Sacrifice, which began at the moment of His Incarnation; but in order to have a perfect understanding of it we must go back to His Eternal Generation in the bosom of the Father; then descend to the creation of the world, which God formed in time by His Eternal Word, upon the idea which is in Him. We must show that man, not having known God in the wisdom of His works, but having on the contrary offended Him, his sin has been the occasion of the passible annihilation of the Word in the flesh and the Sacrifice of reparation which He offered upon the Cross; — that in order to render men capable of worthily adoring God, Jesus Christ has formed them into a mystical Body for Himself; makes

them members of this Body and, by this means, children of God and His coheirs. Thus He renders them one Priest and one Victim with Himself for the Sacrifice of Eternity. In this Gospel all this is comprised, which forms the sublime mystery of the Sacrifice of the Mass".

FIRST PART.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

Of sacrifice in general.

Sacrifice, which has for its object the union of the creature with the Creator, is the essential duty of religion; as religion towards God is an obligation the consciousness of which every rational creature bears in the depth of his heart.

All are bound to adore God as their Creator and first beginning; all owe Him gratitude for His gifts, — for the perfections with which He has enriched their nature, and other benefits which He has so liberally bestowed upon them; and to Him they ought to refer the glory of all they have received. God Himself cannot fail to require these duties of them because He cannot Himself fail to do all things for His own glory, and to be the last end as well as the first principle of His creatures, and of all good that is in them.

Angels are not dispensed from sacrifice, however apart their nature may be from the things which at first sight it appears to demand. What we perceive, however, of religion and sacrifice is not

that which is most essential to either, just as that which is sensible in man is not what essentially constitutes man, but only the outward part: for that which is exterior and sensible is only a sign of the interior, invisible sacrifice, which consists in the essential duties of the reasonable creature towards his Creator. God indeed is only honoured by being loved: *non colitur Deus nisi amando;* according to the oft repeated teaching of St. Augustine; consequently all sacrifice, or at least all that pleases God in sacrifice, [1] is the love with which it is offered; but the duties of intellectual creatures vary according to the different states in which they find themselves and so do their acts of sacrifice.

Thus the sacrifice of a creature in a state of innocence, such as man was in Paradise, differs from that of sinful man; that of the angels or of man in a state of probation, differs from that which is suitable to either in a state of glory, and a creature compounded of spirit and body has a sacrifice different from that of beings purely spiritual.

[1] That this has been more or less universally apprehended is evident from the festal accompaniments which have every where prevailed, and the efforts made to give even the most cruel human sacrifices an appearance of being voluntary.

It is plain that neither the exterior sacrifices of the Old Law, nor even that of the New, as far as it is exterior and sensible, can be suitable to the angels, who have nothing corporeal. The sacrifice of expiation, which supposes sin, could not have been offered by Adam while still in the enjoyment of original justice, and not yet guilty of that violation of charity by which he and his posterity became debtors to the justice of God: nor can the sacrifice of prayer and impetration be suitable either to the angels or to man in a state of glory, where they have no more wants which urge them to pray; all their desires being satisfied and their hopes fulfilled in the enjoyment of the Infinite Good.

Of the four kinds of sacrifice, which are, Adoration, Eucharist or thanksgiving, Expiation, and Impetration, the last is for such only as are still on the way; the third for sinners only; while the two first are due from every intellectual creature, innocent or fallen; in a condition to acquire merit, or having reached the term of possession.

The homage of adoration and gratitude which constitutes the sacrifice of the angels, is not clothed in sensible signs like the legal sacrifices, nor in such as we find in the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Christian Church. As pure spirits their adoration

and thanksgiving are purely spiritual; and so also are their sacrifices. We may indeed apply to them what St. Peter says of Christians; — that they form in heaven an order of holy priests, who offer spiritual sacrifices which are agreeable to God, through Jesus Christ:[1] for the Church tells us that through Jesus Christ the angels praise the majesty of God, the dominations adore, and the powers of heaven tremble with the religious awe which the sight of His greatness and holiness inspires.

This constitutes the sacrifice of the angels in heaven, with which the Church unites her own when about to offer it; and though the parts of the sacrifice have nothing sensible, they are not the less truly real. All on fire with the love of God, angels cease not to adore and praise Him; to offer themselves as holy victims; to refer to God the glory of their natural perfections; to annihilate themselves in presence of His greatness and holiness, and to nourish themselves with Him as the eternal truth, the primordial light, the plenitude of all justice, the infinite beauty which fully satisfies the holy avidity of their love and fills the capacity of their will. Thus it is evident that the angels also are united to God by the bonds of

[1] I. St. Peter 2.

religion, and offer Him sacrifice which is the first duty of their worship as well as of ours. But it is of the latter only we have to treat.

As regards man, therefore, we have four obligations to offer sacrifice; or, in other words, sacrifice is instituted chiefly for four ends.

I. Adoration, by which we acknowledge the greatness of God and render homage to His divine perfections; especially to three. First, the holiness of God, Who is so great, so pure, so apart in Himself, so removed from creatures, that to acknowledge this and express the creature's unworthiness that the all-holy God should show it regard, it is destroyed and consumed in His presence. This seems to be implied by the words of Psalm xxi. ascribed prophetically to the Son of God in His sacrifice: *Tu autem in sancto habitas, laus Israel.* O my God, thou art so holy, so apart in Thy sanctity, so far removed from creatures, that it seems as though, at this moment of my sacrifice, Thou dost not deign to regard me according to my created nature, although I am Thy Son according to my eternal generation and my divine personality in which that nature subsists.

Secondly, we honour His sovereign dominion, not only over life and death, but over our being itself.

That God is the author of being and can alone bestow it, St. Thomas proves as follows: Causes must be in proportion to their effects: the more an effect is universal, the more universal must be the cause; hence it follows that Being, the most general and the most universal effect in Nature, must flow from the most universal cause, which is God.[1]

Sacrifice, instituted to acknowledge God as the author of all created being and to honour His sovereign dominion over it, demands the entire destruction and consumption of this being; and if in sacrifice all is not consumed and destroyed by the death of the victim, this is due to the imperfection of human rites, and the powerlessness of man, who can do no more. Death is therefore only a representation of that entire destruction of being which is due by sacrifice, in homage to the Divine Being and His dominion over all created things: whence it follows that every sacrifice demands indeed the destruction, but not necessarily the death of the victim; death being only one way of destroying, or representing the destruction of things.

Thus under the Mosaic Law the destruction of the things offered in sacrifice was effected in

[1] Sum. Th. art. 45. qu. 5.

different manners: the loaves of proposition were destroyed by being eaten, and by the natural heat of the stomach; the Paschal Lamb and other victims by death; others by fire. In the state of innocence there would have been sacrifices as there would have been worship, but not such sacrifices as are effected by the death of the victims; for death, according to St. Paul, entered into the world only through sin.[1]

Thirdly, sacrifice is intended to acknowledge and honour the plenitude of God; to express that God suffices to Himself, and that no creature is necessary to Him; even Jesus Christ having been able to say in the words of the Psalmist, "Thou art my God because Thou hast no need of my goods."[2] Truly the perfection of God is such that the creature is of no service to Him, and that whatever we do, we are always, in His regard, unprofitable servants, according to the sense of the words of St. Luke, *Servi inutiles sumus.*[3] Unprofitable to God, but not to his works, for although we are useless to God we may be useful to his work, to His Church and to His creatures.

Here, then, is the first end of Sacrifice, viz., to honour God in His holiness, His sovereign

[1] Romans i. 12.
[2] Psalm xv. 1.
[3] St. Luke xvii. 10.

dominion, His plenitude, and all His perfections. The holocausts in which the entire victim was consumed by fire, were instituted under the Mosaic Law with this special intention, which they express more distinctly than the other sacrifices.

II. Sacrifice is offered to God in thanksgiving; to render Him gratitude and homage for His gifts. The sacrifices called peace offerings under the Old Law, were for this end.

III. It is likewise offered in order to make satisfaction, due to the justice of God for our sins, and to render Him propitious to us. Such was the ancient sacrifice called *pro peccato*.

IV. Sacrifice is offered to obtain graces and benefits from the liberality of God; whether for the needs of daily life, or for such as are accidental to men. And though this may seem to regard solely the interest of the creature, it none the less renders homage to God as an acknowledgment of dependence and of the need in which we stand of His assistance, while, at the same time, we confess Him to be the source and cause of all good.

CHAPTER II.

The sacrifice of the Christian religion must be something wholly spiritual and divine.

In order fully to understand the meaning of sacrifice we must realize that religion, in its perfection, is spiritual and independent of the senses. For worship should be in keeping with Him who is adored, that is, with God, who is pure spirit, the sole object of our adoration, to Whom alone sacrifice can be offered. This is the meaning of those words of Jesus Christ: "God is a spirit, and they who adore him must adore in spirit and in truth."[1] If religion, in its perfect state, and adoration, which is its first and essential duty, are spiritual, the sacrifice must be spiritual also; sacrifice being the most perfect form of adoration, the holiest, the most worthy of God; comprising in itself all the worship of true religion.

This, according to the best interpreters, is the meaning of the words of our Lord, Who in answer

[1] St. John iv. 24.

to a difficulty raised by the Samaritan woman as to the place of sacrifice, made her understand that there is no sacrifice worthy of God, except such as is, like Him, spiritual; to be offered in spirit and in truth, and consequently no more attached to a particular place than is God Himself: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall you adore the Father. . . . The hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father also seeketh such to adore him. God is a spirit, and they who adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." [1]

But in order to be worthy of God, the sacrifice must be not only spiritual, it must be wholly divine; containing within itself all the conditions of true sacrifice after a manner wholly divine and spiritual. Nor is there anything in this opposed to the teaching of the Church, regarding the reality of sacrifice as it is at present offered; in which are contained several things exterior and sensible. It is a question of what sacrifice ought to be in its perfect state; and all must admit that as neither the Church nor religion is as yet in that state, so neither is sacrifice in the perfection which it will one day attain.

[1] St. John iv. 21–24.

The Church, religion, and sacrifice, which are ever united, have different ages and developments, and must pass through different stages in order to arrive at their full perfection; and what St. Paul says of the interior Christian, or rather what the Gospel teaches us of Jesus Christ, — that he grew in wisdom, in age, and in grace before God and man, — must be understood of the entire Christ; that is, of the Church under its Head; of religion which is its life, and of sacrifice which is the soul of religion and of the Church. They have their infancy, youth and full age, and these three stages succeed one another so that the last is the perfection of the preceding ones.

Their childhood passed under the law of Moses. As new-born infants and young children are occupied only with sensible things, so religion and sacrifice were then all in the exterior, and had nothing but what was sensible and external; the Church having as yet only the body of religious sacrifice. Their adolescence is under the law of grace. Youth, although capable of using reason, is nevertheless much under the dominion of the senses and dependent upon outward things; so religion and sacrifice possess the spirit and the interior of truth, but are still wrapped in corporeal figures and signs. And as the young grow in height and measure up to full age, so the Church

and religion grow continually, and will increase until the consummation of the ages. Then she will attain her full age, as St. Paul divinely explains in his Epistle to the Ephesians.[1] Consummated in glory, in the unity of God, as the full grown man is no longer guided by the senses but follows reason alone, she will retain only the interior of religion and sacrifice. Requiring no more that exterior covering in which all mysteries are now enveloped, she will possess them simply and in spirit, and behold truth as it is; without veils or signs, or figures.

It is to the perfection and the reality of mysteries that we must aspire. In the words of St. Ambrose: "We have the shadow here below, —the image of things, but the substance is above. The Law contained the shadow, the Gospel has the image, the reality is in heaven. Formerly men sacrified calves and lambs; we offer Jesus Christ, as Man, and as suffering; and He, as Priest, offers Himself for the pardon of our sins. He is offered on earth under a sensible image and veil, but in heaven, where He fulfils the office of advocate and mediator for us with the Father, He is offered in very truth. Here all things are

[1] Ch. ii. 20; iv. 11, 12.

concealed under images and figures, so that we see them only as veiled; there we shall see them face to face, plainly, and in their full perfection; for perfection is found only in the reality of things." [1]

Thus in order to contemplate religion and sacrifice in their perfection, we must separate them from whatever is sensible; such being merely figurative, and instituted only by reason of man's infirmity; — incapable as he is in this life of things purely spiritual.

If we would know sacrifice, therefore, we must believe that what we see is not sacrifice or the reality of the things contained in it; but that, as St. Augustine says and St. Thomas after him, visible sacrifice is only the sign and figure of the invisible.

What we see in the Host with our bodily eyes, is not the Host; what we behold in the priest is not the priest. In a word, what we look upon of the temple, the altar, and everything necessary for the sacrifice, is in truth nothing of all these; faith, which unveils to us things invisible, must make us seek, must make us find the realities figured by these outward signs. In order to do

[1] St. Ambrose l. i. off. c. 48.

this, we must rise in spirit to the bosom of God, where sacrifice is in its perfection, and in Whom the requisites for a full and perfect sacrifice are found to be in a wonderful manner united and contained.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE DESIGN OF GOD IN THE RECONCILIATION OF MEN, AND OF THE QUALITIES OF THE PRIEST WHO SHOULD BE THE MEDIATOR.

God having eternally foreseen the fall of Adam, designed to reconcile mankind with Himself by means of a mediator, chosen from among men, who being himself innocent and just, should make the cause of sinners his own; for, according to St. Thomas, man's misfortune called for a mediator to whom he could have recourse after his sin as to a fellow-man, able, at the same time, to treat of his reconciliation with God.

God willed that this mediator should be a priest, and that in this capacity he should exercise his mediatorial office, and labour for the restoration of the human race; not merely by such priestly functions as intercession and prayer, or by some minor satisfactions offered to God, but by the highest and greatest of all satisfactions, — by that function which belongs most essentially to the

priesthood, namely, Oblation and Sacrifice. Accordingly, in his Epistle to the Hebrews,[1] the Apostle tells us that under every kind of law the Covenant of God with man has been based upon the priesthood; and that in proportion as the priesthood is more excellent, the Covenant also is higher and based on better promises.

In order that this Mediator might be able to reconcile mankind with God, it was not enough that he should be a man and a priest; he must be the Son of God, that, being infinitely holy, he might be infinitely pleasing to God. And who, as St. Paul says, can be more pleasing to the Father than the Son of His love? The same Apostle[2] proves the Divine vocation of this sovereign Priest, by the testimony rendered by the Father that he is his Son, and a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech. "Christ did not glorify himself that he might be made a High Priest; but He who said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. As he says also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech." Thus it has pleased the Holy Ghost to teach us, not only that our great High Priest unites in His own

[1] Hebrews vii. and ix.
[2] Hebrews v.

Person the two characters of Son of God and Priest, but also that the latter follows from the former, and that if He is a Priest it is because He is the Son of God.

Now, being a Priest, it was necessary, St. Paul says, that he should have somewhat to offer; and having to offer for sins, it was necessary that the oblation should be such as could be offered by way of immolation and death. "For every High-Priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins."[1] St. Paul here distinguishes between gifts and sacrifices for sin. By gifts he means oblations generally, which might consist of inanimate things, such as bread, wine, oil; by sacrifices for sins he means offerings consisting of the flesh of animals slain for sacrifice, called in Greek θυσίαι, in Latin *Victimae.*

The Apostle appears to intimate that sacrifices by way of immolation and death had been instituted only in consequence of sin. By the slaughter of an innocent animal man made public declaration that he deserved death; that his sins had rendered him unworthy to be offered to God; and that not being himself a lawful subject for sacrifice, he awaited the advent of a Man, who being also God,

[1] Hebrews v. 1.

should be free from sin, and be one day offered and immolated in his stead. All the victims offered to God before the Law, or under the Law, were types of this one. Sacrifice, therefore, served a two-fold purpose, being both a declaration on man's part that, as a sinner he deserved death and was unworthy to be offered to God, and a public confession of his faith in the expected Redeemer, who should be substituted as a victim in his stead: a protestation which God would only receive through the intermediary of a priest set apart for the purpose.

This High-Priest had for victim nothing else than his own flesh, which he had taken from us in order to offer it for us. For as the Apostle says, "It is impossible that the blood of oxen and goats should take away sin:"[1] therefore to supply for the insufficiency of such victims, God sent His Son into the world, clothed in a passible and mortal body capable of being offered by way of immolation and death.

From the first moment of His Incarnation and entrance into the world, this was made known to Him by the Father, as the sole object of His human nature, namely, that he should be that Victim, by whose oblation God willed

[1] Hebrews x. 4.

to purify hearts from the dead works of sin, and consecrate them to the living God. Accordingly, obedient to the Father's will this beloved Son offered Himself from that very instant to carry out to a perfect fulfilment, by the one oblation of His Body, all that the multitude of victims which had preceded Him had promised and typified without being able to perform. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith: Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not; but a body thou hast fitted to me; holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I, Behold I come to do thy will, O God."[1]

Who can fail to be filled with admiration at the wisdom of the divine plan, adapted so perfectly for the justification of sinners? Of this St. Augustine says,[2] that "True sacrifice can only be offered by a priest who is holy, just, and innocent. The offering should be taken from among those for whom it is to be offered, and be free from imperfection that it may avail for the purification of those who are under sin. But what priest is holy and just like the only-begotten Son of God? Or could another have been found who would not have required to sacrifice for his own sanctification,

[1] Hebrews x. 5-7.

[2] *De Trin.* lib. 4, cap. 14.

whether to remove the stain of his birth, or the additional guilt of his actual sins? What could more properly be taken from men to be offered for them, than the body of a man? And is there anything more fit for immolation and death than a mortal body? or purer for the cleansing of our corrupt nature, than that body virgin-born, which owed nothing to the concupiscence of the flesh? What oblation could possibly be so pleasing to God, or meet with such favourable acceptance as the flesh of our sacrifice, which is the body of our Priest? Thus, considering the four requisites of sacrifice, viz. Him to whom it is offered, He who offers, those for whom it is offered, and finally the thing offered, we find that our one true Mediator, to whom it appertains to reconcile us to God by the sacrifice of peace, is one and the same with Him to whom He sacrifices; that He makes those for whom He sacrifices one and the same with and in Himself; and is Himself He who sacrifices and the thing sacrificed."

St. Augustine here shows us five conditions required to constitute a victim worthy of our Mediator. The victim must be a body; human, mortal, born of a virgin; one which should be the very body of our Saviour Himself. It must be flesh in order to be offered; human flesh taken from man in order to be offered for man; mortal,

that it might be offered by way of death; born of a virgin so as to be stainless and pure; the very flesh of the Son of God in order to be pleasing to God, and to bring all the requisites for the sacrifice of the Christian Church to perfect unity. For, according to this mysterious sequence, He who offers is, by His Divine Person and eternal Nature, one with God the Father; according to His Humanity He is one with man; by this Humanity He is Himself the very victim which He sacrifices; and lastly, by its oblation and sacrifice this Victim, reconciling us to God, enters into and is consummated in the unity of the Godhead; and unites us to one another in the unity of his mystical body, the Church, which He offers along with His natural body at the same time that he offers it for her.

Hence it follows that from the fall of Adam to the end of time, there never has been, or will be, but one true Victim capable of expiating sin and of being, in itself, pleasing to God. It follows further, that in all times and places throughout the universe there has never been but one victim and one true sacrifice; and that if animals were offered in sacrifice before the advent of the great High-Priest who offered himself as victim, such sacrifices were not commanded by God, offered to Him, or accepted by Him, except in as far as they promised, pro-

phesied and represented that One Sacrifice. They were indeed only sacrifices by analogy and in their relation to that one; or rather they formed but one sacrifice with that of Jesus Christ. Thus the Son of God is called in Scripture, *Agnus occisus ab origine Mundi* — "The Lamb which was slain from the beginning of the world;"[1] that is, mystically, in figure, or, so to speak, in effigy.

It was indeed, properly speaking, Jesus Christ who was offered and immolated in the sacrifices of Abel, Noe, Abraham, Moses, and Aaron. He it was, says St. Augustine, who was predicted and signified. Hence the importance which the latter everywhere attaches to these ancient sacrifices; calling them mute words of the promises, or, with the Apostle, shadows of things to come, of which Jesus Christ was the substance and the reality; — outlines of this one true sacrifice which was to be offered for the sins of the world; or prophecies of the victim which Jesus Christ should offer in offering Himself. Again he speaks of them as representations conveying a promise of the truth of that sacrifice which was to be accomplished by the immolation of the body and blood of our Lord; representations which had been instituted by God in such great variety, as

[1] Apoc. xiii. 8.

though, by expressing the same idea in different ways, the better to recommend and announce it without causing weariness; and, for the greater consolation of men, to keep before them in multiplied and divers forms the promise of the one true Victim, through whom they should be reconciled to Himself by the pardon of their sins — united to God in Jesus Christ our Lord, become, for this end, the Head of the Faithful, of whom He has formed His mystical body, making them his members.

CHAPTER IV

THAT JESUS CHRIST IS A PRIEST ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDECH; NOT ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF AARON.

It was necessary, as we have seen, that Jesus Christ should be a Priest in order to be our Mediator; but He could not be such according to the order of Aaron, because the legal priesthood, having been attached to the tribe of Levi by the inviolable command of God, could only devolve upon members of that tribe.

The Israelites were accustomed, to keep a very exact register of the descendants of Aaron and to preserve their genealogies with much care, in order to guard against mistake in so important a matter, and to justify a claim to the priesthood by the line of succession which was called the Order of Aaron. But our Lord Jesus Christ, being of the royal tribe of Judah, and not of the sacerdotal tribe, it is clear, as the Apostle says, that if

he was to be a priest his priesthood must be of another order. It was indeed of an order altogether superior, which St. Paul, speaking by divine inspiration, calls the order of Melchisedech; not because our Lord was descended from him according to the flesh, as other priests were descended from Aaron, but because, long before the priesthood of Aaron, the lofty order in which our Lord stands alone, having neither predecessors nor successors, had been shadowed forth by the remarkable resemblance which Melchisedech bore to Him of whom he was the type.

In what this resemblance consists the Apostle tells us, viz. that the name Melchisedech signifies king of Justice; that he was king of Salem (afterwards Jerusalem), which is to say king of Peace; that he was without father, without mother, and without genealogy; meaning that he was not enrolled in any catalogue in which the names of his father and mother, or any of his ancestors might be found, to justify his priesthood by natural succession; that his priesthood had neither beginning nor end, by which must be understood that no record existed of his birth or death, as in the case of other priests;—a mysterious silence intended to convey the idea of his priesthood being figuratively eternal, i. e. having succeeded to none, since he is introduced without

father or mother and being succeeded by none, since he is without descendants.

All these characteristics apply eminently to the only Son of God. He is the king of justice and of peace, having brought them into the world along with Himself, as the Prophet says, "In his days shall justice spring up and abundance of peace".[1] He is without father, without mother, and without lineage; that is, without predecessor or successors in the sacerdotal order, because there is neither beginning nor end of his priesthood by way of succession. No beginning because He received it by a divine consecration, directly from God, having been anointed in a more excellent manner than any who had filled the office of priest: no end, because he has not transmitted His dignity to any successor whom he has clothed with it, despoiling himself. Hence it follows that He truly, not Melchisedech, is the priest for ever, and that He is so because his priesthood exists according to the virtue of a life immortal and glorious, which can never be destroyed, not according to the law of a carnal succession; that is, one which attached the priesthood to an order of birth and natural succession.[2]

[1] Psalm lxxi. 7.

[2] Hebrews vii. 16.

For the priesthood of Jesus Christ did not, like that of other priests, cease with His death; rather He has been consummated and perfected by His Passion according to the words: "It became him for whom and by whom are all things, willing to bring many children into glory, that he should perfect the author of their salvation by his sufferings"; and having thus entered into the fulness of His glory, He is become the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Now this perfection and consummation has been attained by His entire glorification, which comprises, as St. Augustine says, His Resurrection and Ascension. It is therefore in this double mystery that He is called by God the perfect Pontiff according to the order of Melchisedech.

The eternity of the Priesthood of the Son of God being based upon the eternity of His life, it follows that in meriting by His death to rise again and live eternally, He merited also to be eternally a Priest, and that Jesus Christ, in consequence of His immortality, is not only a perfect priest, but the sole and only priest. This is the evident meaning of the Apostle, when he says that there were many priests in the order of Aaron because, being subject to death, one must of necessity succeed another in order to maintain the priesthood; while Jesus Christ, on the con-

trary, remaining eternally, his Priesthood also is eternal. If it be eternal, He can have no successor, and must therefore be the only Priest; the reason for multiplying priests, namely, the necessity of filling the places of those who died, having ceased in Him; and since the multiplicity of priests according to the Law depended upon their mortality, in like manner the unity and singularity of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ depends upon the immortal life by which he continues for ever. [1]

From the perpetuity of our Lord's Priesthood St. Paul deduces, moreover, the truth that He is for ever able to save them who come to God through His mediation and in His name, since He is always living to make intercession for us; and upon this he would have us ground our hope and consolation. [2]

Again, he infers that, the Priesthood having been changed, it became necessary that there should be a corresponding change in the Covenant and in the Law; these three, Priesthood, Covenant, and Law, being inseparably linked together in all revealed Religion. [3]

[1] Hebrews vii. 13–14.
[2] Hebrews vii. 25.
[3] Hebrews vii. 12.

The Covenant depends upon the Priesthood, for the office of the priest, as mediator between God and man, is to reconcile man with God by means of His sacrifice, and to restore the friendship between them taken away by sin; while the Law is the necessary condition of the Covenant which can only exist between God and man by means of promises made by God to man, and an engagement by which man, on his side, binds himself to do the will of God.

Since, then, in the Priesthood of Jesus Christ the priesthood of Aaron has been exchanged for that of the true Melchisedech, the Old Testament has, in like manner, been changed into the New, of which He has Himself become the Mediator and surety;[1] for in as much as Jesus Christ merited by His death the restoration of mankind to grace and friendship with God, the blood which He shed and the sacrifice He offered is made, as He declared during His lifetime, the seal and pledge of our redemption.

Thus the New Testament, ratified by his adorable blood, has as many more advantages over the former as the new priesthood has over the old, and rests upon greater and more magnificent promises. For under the former covenant, God

[1] Hebrews vii. 22.

only promised to give the Children of Israel a fruitful land and temporal prosperity, on condition of their remaining faithful to the observance of the Law; but under the new He engages to bring the true Israelites, the Faithful, to the inheritance of heaven, the true land of the living, not simply under the condition that they shall keep the Law, but Himself enabling them to do so by the gift of His Spirit and His grace. This St. Paul proves from the words of the Prophet Jeremias, which contain the promises of the New Covenant.[1] "For this is the testament which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will print my laws upon their minds, and upon their hearts will I write them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour and his brother saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest of them; because I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more."[2]

The Priesthood and the Testament having been changed, there had to be a corresponding change in the Law; for those ordinances of Moses have

[1] Hebrews viii. 10.
[2] Jerem. xxxi. 33.

ceased which the Israelites had sworn to observe in order to be heirs of the temporal promises, and nothing remains of them except the law of charity and the commandments of justice. These, written under the old testament only on tables of stone, which could not endue men with strength to observe them, are, under the new, written by the finger of God; that is to say, by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of men; which by an infusion of charity renders them just before God.[1]

Lastly, the Apostle deduces the superiority of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ over that of Aaron from the fact that Melchisedech, who represented Him, going to meet Abraham on his return victorious over five kings, blessed him first; an undoubted proof that he was greater than Abraham, for without question he who gives the benediction is greater than he who receives it.

Moreover, Melchisedech received from Abraham tithes of the spoils which the latter had carried off from his vanquished enemies; and in receiving this from Abraham, he received it virtually from Levi, Aaron, and all their descendants who were, so to speak, contained in Abraham. Judge from this, argues St. Paul, how great must be this new Priest according to the order of Melchisedech,

[1] Hebrews viii. 10.

since he who represented Him, being only His shadow and figure, had a right to bless him who had the promises; in whose posterity all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and in return for this benediction to receive tithes from him, and in him, from all his posterity.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN AND HOW JESUS CHRIST FULFILLED THE FUNCTIONS OF A PRIEST ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDECH.

There are authors who state that in offering Himself on the Cross, Jesus Christ fulfilled the function of a Priest according to the order of Aaron, because He was then sacrificed with the shedding of blood, in a manner which bore relation to the offering of the legal victims.

It is true that in Our Lord's sacrifice the three first parts, viz. His consecration, oblation and immolation, find a more express and sensible counterpart in the types and circumstances of the Aaronic sacrifices: for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ being too perfect to be represented by any single sacrifice, God instituted several, so that each one might typify it in some of its circumstances. The Apostle however tells us expressly that Jesus Christ was not a priest according to the order of Aaron, not having come of the sa-

cerdotal tribe; hence we hold for certain that, remaining in the order figured by the priesthood of Melchisedech, His only relation to the sacrifices of the Law of Moses consisted in His having, by one oblation, fulfilled all the shadows and figures of the legal victims with the various oblations which belonged to the worship of Aaron; as things of a superior order comprehend and imply those pertaining to inferior orders, with the addition of something more.

St. Paul's special object being to exalt the Priesthood of Jesus Christ and show its superiority over that of Aaron, he mentions only the Sacrifice of the Cross, wherein Christ offered himself to God, through the Eternal Spirit, as a holy Victim, to expiate the iniquities committed under the first Testament, and to blot out the sins of many. Moreover the levitical priesthood had been abolished because of its incompetence to purify hearts and lead those who used it to perfect justice; for which it was necessary that another priest should arise according to a new order, to be the mediator of a fresh covenant for the reconciliation of man with God.[1] But Jesus Christ is the mediator of the new covenant only by His death; consequently, in His death He

[1] Hebrews vii. 15.

exercised the functions of priest according to the order of Melchisedech; thus making the first public use of His Priesthood on the Cross, He completed and consummated it by His entrance into heaven; and it is only by His state, glorified and immortal, at the right hand of the Father, that He has for ever entered into possession of this eternal Priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech. Hence it is in the last two parts of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the consummation and the communion as we shall presently explain them, that the likeness to the sacrifice of Melchisedech chiefly appears.

For Jesus Christ has been established a Priest according to the order of Melchisedech, by his entrance into heaven, in order to fulfil the first and principal function of the Priesthood, which is the oblation of sacrifice. "Now of the things we have spoken this is the sum; we have a High-Priest, who is set at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the Holy of Holies, and of the true Tabernacle which the Lord hath set up, and not man."[1] The Apostle here alludes to what passed in the ancient Law, the High-Priest being the minister of the figurative sanctuary called the *Sancta Sanctorum*—

[1] Hebrews viii. 1–2.

Holy of Holies. He compares this ancient tabernacle with heaven, the Pontiff with Jesus Christ, Whom he calls the minister of the true tabernacle which is heaven, after the figure of which the other had been made. And since the High-Priest of the Law exercised the chief function of the priesthood when he entered into the symbolical tabernacle, so Jesus Christ likewise exercised His when He entered into the true tabernacle, that is to say, into heaven; into the very bosom of God.

Jesus Christ being High-Priest in heaven necessarily offers there. Every priest being appointed to offer gifts and victims, He, too, must have something to offer, and what can it be but that which He offered once upon earth, viz., the victim of his own Body, of which He perpetually renews and continues the oblation in heaven?

The oblation of Jesus Christ has not, therefore, been so completed and exhausted upon earth, as to have no further exercise in heaven; rather, it was only begun here below, in order to its continuance there, where the perfection of sacrifice is found.

Now that He is ever living in his Victim, He is a Priest, celestial not terrestrial; inasmuch as this form of priesthood, founded upon the power of an immortal life, is not suitable to

earth. So far then from interfering in any way with His Priesthood or the exercise of its functions, His elevation to the highest heavens is that which puts him in the condition to exercise it.

A striking type is found [1] in the figure of the High-Priest, who entered once yearly by the outer tabernacle into the sanctuary which was called the Holy of Holies. After the immolation of a goat in expiation of the sins of the people; bearing in his hands the blood of the victim which he elevated and offered to God, the High-Priest implored Him to forget, in consideration of this blood, his sins and ignorances, and those of the whole people of Israel; and by this ceremony, expiation was made for all offences.

St. Paul shows this to have been accomplished, according to the fulness of truth, in Jesus Christ, who being the "Pontiff of future good things," entered not into the sanctuary made by hands, after the model of the true one, but into heaven; into the very bosom of the Father. He entered there by a much more august and perfect tabernacle than that of Moses; not one made in the ordinary manner, nor formed by the hand of man like the other; that is to say, He entered through

[1] Hebrews ix.

the opening of His own body. He entered, having purchased for us eternal redemption, and ransomed us, at the price of his Blood, from the state of servitude and death to which our iniquities had brought us. He entered to present Himself before the face of God for us, to abolish sin by the offering of Himself, and to make continual intercession for us.

The levitical priest, entering into the Temple, offered the blood of the victims, that is, of goats or calves which had been slain; and this offering which recalled the death by which they had been immolated was a true sacrifice, or rather the consummation and perfection of the sacrifice. If it was in virtue of this blood that he ventured to present himself and make prayers and supplications to God, slaying the victims outside the tabernacle only in order to offer their blood within; let us say also that Jesus Christ shed His blood upon the Cross only in order to offer it to God in the true Sanctuary, and that His first oblation of Himself on earth was in order to the second and eternal one by which He was to offer this blood in heaven in expiation of the sins of men.

This throws light upon an important truth in chapters i. and ii. of Leviticus and elsewhere, viz. that although all the parts of the sacrifice united

to form but one oblation, nevertheless the oblation was made, in particular and manifestly, under two ceremonies. The first, when the victim, brought to the door of the tabernacle, was presented to the priest, and received by him in the name and by the authority of God; the second, after its immolation, when pouring the blood around the altar, and taking the fat with a portion of the flesh, the priest raised it towards heaven and placed it on the altar of holocausts, to be burned in honour of the divine majesty; and in Scripture this elevation is called oblation, and a way of approaching God, because it placed the priest in the attitude of prayer. The first oblation was for the death, the second was a memorial of the death; the first was to satisfy the justice of God by transferring to an innocent victim the penalty due to the guilty; the second to apply this satisfaction to the benefit of the offerer, and obtain that his sins should not be imputed to him.

CHAPTER VI.

IN PLACE OF THE ANCIENT SACRIFICES, THAT OF JESUS CHRIST CONTAINS ALL THEIR KINDS, CONDITIONS, AND PARTS.

The number and diversity of sacrifices under the Law of Moses have now ceased. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ has been offered to satisfy for all the duties and wants of the creature, and contains in itself alone, the real fulfilment of all the different kinds of sacrifice formerly in use. "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world the Son of God saith, Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou fitted to me; holocausts for sin did not please Thee; then said I, Behold I come, in the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will."[1] Here, we learn, in the words of the Son of God Himself, the intentions with which He offered Himself to the Father in His humanity; and that His body was substituted for the holocausts by which God was

[1] Hebrews x. 5–7.

adored, for the peace-offerings, and for all the various oblations and sacrifices instituted by God under the old dispensation.

To present and offer Jesus Christ to God the Father, fulfils in the most perfect manner all the obligations of the ancient sacrifices, for in so doing, we keep up that divine intercourse between God and man of which religion is the expression; speaking to God, not only face to face like Moses, but to His heart, in the depth of His Spirit, by His own victim, His Word, Jesus Christ, the truth, the perfection, and the fulfilment of all the sacrifices of the ancient Law.

These, as we have already observed, were of different kinds; holocausts, peace-offerings, and sacrifices for sin. Among the latter we find the sacrifice of the scapegoat, which on the feast of expiation was driven out of the camp into the desert to be devoured by wild beasts; that of the Paschal Lamb; that also of the loaves of proposition which were kept, or, as we may say, put in reserve. Previous to the Law there had also been the sacrifice of Abraham, and that of Melchisedech. Among the legal sacrifices some were exclusively offered to God, as the holocaust in which neither the people nor the priest, had any share: in others the priests participated, and the people after them.

The sacrifice of our Lord answers perfectly to all these, and contains in itself all their different kinds. He is the perfect holocaust, wholly consecrated and offered to God, for Whom He is immolated entire, as also for the people, who receive Him entire without division or diminution.

But to understand this fully, and have a true idea of the Christian sacrifice, we must note that there were five conditions necessary to a perfect sacrifice according to the Law, or five parts which constituted it; that these are found for the most part in all other sacrifices, but are contained in that of Jesus Christ in a fulness and perfection suited to its pre-eminence. They are 1, the sanctification of the victim; 2, the oblation; 3, the immolation; 4, the burning or consumption; 5, the communion.

The sanctification of the victim was the first requisite of sacrifice; for it would be disrespect to the Majesty of God to offer him anything opposed to his holiness. Thus the sanctification of the legal victims represented that which the true victim as bound to have. This sanctification had four conditions, which were proportionally required in those which they represented. First the natural perfection of the victim. "If it be blemished, or lame, or blind, or in any part deformed or imperfect; it shall not be a sacrifice to the

Lord thy God.[1] All these natural defects are, in man, effects and consequences of the sin of Adam; and the rejection of animals which had such, marked how opposed to God is all that has to do with sin; for the exterior sacrifice being intended to represent the interior, the perfection of the material victim is a fitting representation of the perfection of the spiritual one. This perfection was also required by God in the typical victims in order to symbolise the perfection of the true victim, the Lamb of God promised by the Law; — Jesus Christ the victim of God. Lastly, it represented the great principle of Christian morality viz. that our actions, which are our victims, are unworthy to be offered to God and received by Him, except when sanctified by charity which constitutes their perfection. For we should offer to God only things perfect, at least in their degree; in which nothing is opposed to the perfection to be looked for in gifts which are offered to the infinite majesty of the Creator.

The supernatural sanctification of the victim, that is, something above human power or authority, coming from the authority and institution of God, which raises the victim above its natural order and frees it from the dominion of man and

[1] Deut. xv. 21.

the servitude of corruption, was shown by the ceremonies which the ministers of the Temple used over the victims brought there, and which conferred upon them a legal holiness, according to which they were regarded as sacred. The victim set apart from all profane use, could no longer be applied without sacrilege to any thing except the service of God; being regarded as so entirely consecrated to the divine Majesty that none were allowed to touch it; so that only the priest could lay his hands on the consecrated object. The obligation or duty of immolating the victim, was a consequence of its sanctification; in virtue of which it had become due to God in sacrifice, to be destroyed and consumed in His honour.

The second requisite, or part of sacrifice was the oblation of the victim; performed in words prescribed by divine command.

The third, viz. the immolation of the victim by death, supposes sin; for although sacrifice truly demands the destruction or annihilation of the victim in some form or other, it need not be in that of death, as has already been said.

The fourth condition was the consumption of the victim, which was ordinarily done by fire, and called, on that account, the burning. It was, however, also done in other ways; as in the sa-

crifice of the loaves of proposition, which were consumed by manducation and the fire of natural heat.

Several reasons may be given for the destruction of the victims by fire. It consumed all that was superfluous or imperfect. It glorified and rendered it a figure of the risen Jesus our Pasch, the true victim of salvation, Who was glorified after His immolation on the Cross: for nothing represents to us so well as fire, a body resplendent with light and glory. Moreover the victim was burned in order that, as the smoke rose up on high, it might appear that God accepted the sacrifice, and was pleased with it. For the spiritual Jews this was a type and figure of its acceptance; as to the more ignorant, their belief was, perhaps, not very different from that of the Pagans, who thought that the gods were fed by the smoke of the incense and the victims. Thus they believed that, when the victim was consumed by fire, God accepted their sacrifice and participated in it; saying that God had received the odour of the sacrifice to express that he had been pleased with it.[1]

Finally, it expressed the nature and effect of true sacrifice, which is to unite us to God by

[1] Genesis viii. 20, 21.

a union so close that Jesus Christ gives it the name of unity. For by sacrifice we become, as it were, the bread of God, taken into His bosom to live there by His life. As, in the figurative sacrifices, the victim took the place of man, so fire took the place of God, and represented Him; and whether the fire came down from heaven to consume the victim, as sometimes happened, or whether it was kindled by the minister of God in His name and by His authority, it equally appeared that God entered into communion of the sacrifices offered to Him.

For in the old dispensation God showed Himself under the symbol of fire; Moses saw him in a burning bush and the people heard that the God whom they worshipped was *a consuming fire.*[1] God also led the Israelites in the desert under the figure of a pillar of fire, and came in the form of fire, when He gave the Law on Mount Sinai. Thus when the fire consumed the victims, it seemed as if God, whom it represented, united them to Himself and communicated in the sacrifices; and man, unable to give his victims to God to be changed into Him, gave them to the fire; changing them into that which represented God most perfectly, as being the purest and noblest of the elements.

[1] Deut. iv. 24.

The destruction of the victim, as far as that could be accomplished, was a protestation that God, the source of all being and life, has absolute dominion over creatures as their sovereign master. He alone has the power of life and death over them; as by His will He drew them out of nothing, and can cause them to return to it when and as he pleases. It was an acknowledgment also of the holiness of God; testifying that God is not tied to His creatures, nor dependent upon His works, since they are destroyed in the very act of being offered to Him. Nor ought it to seem strange that in order to honour the sanctity of God we destroy, as far as we can, the effect of His power; for as the justice of God receives no prejudice from his mercy, so neither does His power from His holiness; both are known and honoured, the one by creation, the other by sacrifice. In protesting as we do by sacrifice, that God is all that He is independently of creatures; that nothing is necessary to Him either for His existence or His happiness; we proclaim His sanctity, and give expression in action to the truth that He is before any of them were, and would continue to be if all were destroyed, as the victim appears to be. For the victim represents the universe and holds its place, (*vicaria universi*), so that the world which ought to be destroyed in homage

to God, is, so to speak, destroyed in the victim in figure or effigy.

Sacrifice therefore, answers to all that God is. It regards Him as the Sovereign Being to whom all being is due. It regards Him in the incomprehensible greatness and perfection which are proper to Him, as above all name, all light, all thought, all adoration, all love. In offering everything to God, we protest that He is naught of all which constitutes the universe, and that all things are naught of Him. For each victim sacrificed in the place of all creatures and by substitution representing them, becomes in a certain manner all things; and all things are supposed to be sacrificed in the host which is sacrificed in the place of every creature; as it is said of Jesus Christ in relation to mankind: *ut pro omnibus gustaret mortem.*[1] Sacrifice witnesses that God is above all love, above all adoration, above all that is created; sacrifice is the consummation of all truth and goodness, the very perfection and consummation of things; and virtue becomes a perfect sacrifice when it reaches the perfection of charity, which wills to be nothing except in God and for God.

The last part of sacrifice is the communion.

[1] Hebrews ii. 9.

To communicate is to participate in, or have one's share of the victim. This was wont to be divided into three parts, of which the first, given to the fire, was, so to speak, God's share, by which He communicated in the sacrifice in the manner explained above. The second part was given to be eaten by the priest; the third by the people.

CHAPTER VII.

APPLICATION OF THE CONDITIONS AND PARTS OF SACRIFICE TO THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD LAW.

The parts required to make a complete sacrifice are found in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, of which mention is made in Exodus ch. vii. God commanded Moses that on the tenth day of the moon of that month in which the Israelites had been delivered from Egyptian bondage, they should separate from their flocks a lamb of a year old without blemish or defect. Here is the consecration, that is, the separation of the victim from profane uses, and its destination or appropriation to God.

The lamb was afterwards brought to the Temple, and there presented, a living sacrifice to God; or, if the offering was to be in a private house instead of the Temple, the lamb was brought there and offered as in a place of sacrifice. This was the second part, or oblation.

On the fourteenth day of the same moon it had to be killed; this was the immolation of the

victim, and shows, we may observe, that all the parts of the sacrifice were not necessary accomplished on the same day.

The lamb was to be roasted with fire, by which all that was superfluous in the victim was consumed, and in this consisted the consummation, or glorifying of the victim. Lastly, the lamb was to be eaten; which constituted the communion of the sacrifice.

These same parts are likewise found in the sacrifices called holocausts; for he who would offer a holocaust, (1) chose an animal which had all the qualities demanded by the Law; separated it from all profane uses, and destined it to be offered in sacrifice; (2) he led the victim thus set apart to the gate of the Tabernacle, and there offered it living to God; (3) it was slain and immolated; lastly, it was entirely consumed by fire, by which it seemed that God communicated in the victim. As He alone took part in this sacrifice the consummation and the communion are not manifested separately.

The same parts are to be found in the sin-offerings. These differ from the burnt-offerings in that the victim was not wholly consumed, but only the portion ordained by divine command; the remainder was for the priests who by eating it communicated in the sacrifice.

The same applies to the peace-offering, except that the worshipper offering this sacrifice also ate thereof, whereas God alone communicated in the holocaust; God and the priests in the sin-offerings.

The Old Law contained a commandment for the consecration to God of the first-born, whether of man or beast, in thanksgiving for the deliverance of the Israelites, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain, their own being spared through the blood of the Paschal Lamb; and so strict was this obligation that it was reckoned a grave fault before the Law to shear the wool of a first-born lamb, to use for labour an ox first-born; in a word to put the victim reserved for God to ordinary uses.

It was also a violation of the Law to allow victims once consecrated to God to die a natural death: it was necessary to immolate them in one or other of the above-mentioned sacrifices. So also the priests were obliged to eat that portion of the victim which fell to their share; if they could not do so all at once, the remainder was kept for another time, but it might not be left to decay, so that if it was in danger of corruption they were obliged under pain of grave sin to burn what they were unable to eat. The share of the priests, and that

given to the person who offered the victim for sacrifice was called sacred flesh, and the latter had the same obligation with regard to it as the priests.

Another sacrifice, that of the two goats, that contains a striking figure of some features to be found in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. One goat, having been set apart and offered, was slain and burnt as a holocaust, thus representing the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; this last mystery being so to speak, the communion of the Eternal Father in the victim of His Son, whom He received, withdrawing Him into His bosom. The other, laden with all the maledictions which the people had deserved for their sins, was led outside the borders into the desert, there to be devoured by wild beasts; and they alone entered into communion, if it may be so said, in this victim. The animal was a type of Jesus Christ, upon whom the Father has laid the iniquities of us all, who was led outside the limits of Jerusalem, there to be slain by the wild beasts, that is, by the Gentiles, who are thus denominated in several passages of Holy Scripture. Now, it is the Gentiles who, up to this stime, have almost exclusively communicated in Jesus Christ, sacrificed for the sins of the world, while the mass of the Jewish nation has rejected him.

Observe also, that they who led the goat into the desert remained unclean untill the evening, nor held communication with their brethren, till having washed their clothes they returned at eventide within the limits of the people of God; so the Jews having delivered up Him who was made a curse for us to the wild beasts, the Gentiles, to be put to death, remain unclean, and will by their unbelief be excluded from the Church of God until the evening of the age, i. e. until the end of the world. Then, when the number of the elect from among the Gentiles shall have been filled up, the Jews will be converted, and washed by baptism in the blood of Jesus Christ will re-enter the communion of the people of God, which is the Church.

It must be borne in mind, as been already intimated, that the five parts of sacrifice were not necessarily observed upon the same day. First-born animals were sanctified from their birth and immolated long afterwards. The animal sanctified and offered at the door of the Tabernacle was not necessarily sacrificed immediately: the immolation might be deferred at will, and the flesh offered in sacrifice might be preserved for some time. The Paschal Lamb sanctified on the tenth day of the month, was slain on the fourteenth. The eating of the victims might con-

tinue several days, it being often impossible to consume them entirely on the day on which they had been offered; for the Paschal Lamb only, it was of precept that nothing should be left until the morning, and that what remained should be consumed by fire.

CHAPTER VIII.

APPLICATION OF THE PARTS OF SACRIFICE TO THAT OF JESUS CHRIST.

We come now to the sacrifice of the New Law, which is that of Jesus Christ, assuming as a principle that the true sacrifice of which those of the Old Law and all others were types, consists of His entire life from the first moment of the Incarnation unto eternity. The sacrifices of the Law being imperfect did not each, distinctly and perfectly, possess all the parts and conditions of which we have spoken; but that of Jesus Christ, which is infinitely perfect, has whatever is necessary for the perfection of sacrifice in a manner altogether perfect and divine; making the sacrifice of the New Testament a complete fulfilment and antitype of all that had gone before.

First, the sanctification of Jesus Christ as Victim, was accomplished in the Incarnation; in which mystery the Saviour was sanctified and consecrated by God Himself: "Whom the Father

hath sanctified;"[1] and, what is peculiar to Jesus Christ, by this same mystery in which He was consecrated and sanctified to be the victim of God He was also consecrated as Priest for eternity: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech." Victim and Priest for ever; in this consists the chief difference between the sacrifice and priesthood of the Order of Aaron and that of Jesus Christ. The former was not intended to last always; its sacrifices which could not please God became extinct, — abolished by the sacrifice of the Cross which was their realization and fulfilment; while the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will continue eternally in heaven; and it is of this we now treat.

Besides His first and principal sanctification, Jesus Christ was also consecrated to His Father as first-born. Other first-born sons were redeemed, because, as sinners, they unworthy to be offered to God and were unlawful for sacrifice. The Son of God was bound, indeed, to accomplish the precepts of the Law, but not always according to the letter and in figure as others were. Thus He was not bound to give a lamb to the Temple to redeem Himself, but to offer His body, of which the lamb was a type, to redeem His people.

[1] St. John x. 36.

At the time of His Incarnation, knowing it to be the will of the Eternal Father that He should hold the place of all men, and be Himself the antitype of all the victims which had been immolated under the Law, the Son of God finds Himself at the entrance of the Tabernacle, and this Tabernacle is the bosom of God Himself. For, according to the explanation of the Fathers, the Tabernacle of the Old Law was the figure of the bosom of the eternal Father; whence St. Paul calls the former *sanctum seculare*, an earthly and temporal sanctuary, to distinguish it from the *tabernaculum æternum,* the Eternal tabernacle and sanctuary. The Son of God was, we say, at the entrance of this tabernacle; that is, although He was in this eternal tabernacle of the Godhead according to His Divine Essence, and also according to the Person of the Word in which His Humanity subsists, He was not in it according to His mortal flesh, for that flesh was then in the bosom of the blessed Virgin; and it is in regard of this flesh destined for sacrifice that He was as at the entrance of the eternal tabernacle.

Further, the victim of the legal sacrifice possessed no intrinsic or natural holiness, but was merely accounted holy before the Law, on account of its destination for sacrifice, and of certain divinely prescribed ceremonies; whereas the holi-

ness of Jesus Christ, our true Victim, is a true holiness, interior, natural, and altogether divine. Holy not only in His birth, but holy in the Virgin's womb before His birth, as it was declared to her by the Angel. *Quod nascetur ex te sanctum* [1] That which is born of her is of the Holy Ghost. [2] He is therefore, holy and consecrated to God as first-born of the Eternal Father, and first-born of the Virgin. He is likewise sanctified by the holiness of His Father, of whom He is also first-born by His eternal generation: for the Son of God and the Son of Mary are not two Sons, but one and the same, born according to His Divine Nature in the bosom of His Father from all eternity; and born according to His Human Nature in the bosom of His Mother, in the midst of time. By the first birth He was begotten holy with all the sanctity of the Godhead, one God with his eternal Father; and the Human Nature, personally united to the Son of God by His temporal birth, received also the communication of His holiness.

Who can conceive the infinite distance which separates the holiness of the legal victims from that of our Divine Victim? In place of the im-

[1] St. Luke i. 35.
[2] St. Matt. i. 20.

position of hands accompanied by certain prayers, by which the consecration of the former was effected, the body of Jesus Christ was sanctified and consecrated to Himself by God the Father in the mystery of the Incarnation, in the ineffable manner above declared. Not by imposition of hands did He take possession, but by His whole Substance, to which the Humanity of Jesus Christ was united in such manner that it was possessed by the entire Substance of the Father. Instead of a few words by which the legal victims were consecrated, the Eternal Father consecrates this Humanity by the very Person of the Word, His eternal speech. Thus has the Son of God been sanctified from the first moment of His Incarnation, when He received His body as a victim consecrated to God: *Corpus autem aptasti mihi*[1] this consecration He expressed and renewed on the eve of His death, by the words addressed to the Father, "I sanctify myself for them".[2]

Second, the Oblation. This also was made at the moment of the Incarnation. Seeing that the divine justice could not be satisfied by the sacrifice of animals offered under the Old Law, and that God had given Him a body to be substituted

[1] Hebrews x. 5.
[2] St. John xvii. 19.

for them as His true victim, Jesus Christ said, A body thou hast fitted to me; Behold I come to do thy will, O my God.[1] Thus, according to St. Paul, Jesus offered Himself to God in place of the ancient sacrifices. And this not in a passing manner as had been the case with former victims; His oblation beginning at that moment was to last for ever; for Jesus Christ will never cease to offer Himself to God by a permanent and eternal oblation, though with this difference, that during His mortal life He offered Himself to His Father as a victim to be one day immolated in His honour, — "Behold, I come to do thy will" — whereas, since His death and resurrection, He offers Himself as a Victim once immolated and ever living before God to adore Him, as He began to do on His entrance into the world.

Moreover, by these words, the Son of God teaches us the truth we have insisted upon above, namely, that adoration and sacrifice are the chief acts of religion and constitute the first duty of the creature towards God; and, properly speaking, He alone was able to perform it; for although all are under obligation to offer themselves in sacrifice to God, yet sin having rendered them

[1] Hebrews x. 9.

unclean, they could not acquit themselves of the duty. And as sin had infected all creatures and spread its curse over them, this did not apply to men only, but animals were unclean and unworthy to be offered to God, till by commanding sacrifices, He had Himself permitted it and dispensed from the irregularity.

Thus, during the ages before Jesus Christ, nature would have been impotent to testify its gratitude to the Creator by this first duty of religion, had not God chosen certain animals as accepted figures of His Son, and willed them to be offered to Him as such. For, having some sign or mark by which in some way they typified the Son of God, they acquired a figurative holiness, and were called clean animals; irregularity was thus taken away and they were offered in the place of men. Other animals remaining unclean were redeemed as well as men: *Asinum redimes ove;* or else they were killed, not to honour God by sacrifice, but only to destroy their life.

We have said that the Son of God was, from the time of His Incarnation, sanctified and offered to God as First-born. It will be well to examine the reason for which God had in former times chosen the first-born to be offered to Him in sacrifice.

Long before the Law was given the first-born were held in account before God. We know that Abraham received command to offer his first-born son "Take thy only son, whom thou lovest, and go to the Land of Vision, and thou shalt offer him in sacrifice."[1] But a long time before this the first-born were offered to God. Some have supposed that eldest sons were priests; but this cannot have been a right of primogeniture, for Abel was a priest since he offered sacrifice, and yet he was not the eldest son.

Abraham received the first express command to offer his first-born; and it was, on this account that to him was made the promise of the Messias; as though God had said: Because thou hast given me thy son I will give thee mine. God was pleased to give not only His First-born, but His only-begotten Son: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son,"[2] and hence He demanded the eldest who were at the same time only sons when they were offered. Thus we see that God demanded the first-born as a type, of His Incarnate Son, who alone was to be His victim; to honour whom and to keep up by a prophetic sign the remembrance

[1] Genesis xxii. 2.
[2] St. John iii. 16.

of the promise and hope of His coming, God required that all the eldest sons should be offered to Him. But although thus offered in expectation of the coming of Jesus Christ they were unclean by reason of sin, and consequently unlawful as victims; moreover, God would have no human sacrifices, therefore, along with the eldest son a lamb was offered to be immolated in his stead.

The third part of sacrifice was the killing of the victim. This, as we have seen, might be deferred at will: so also the immolation of the Son of God did not follow immediately upon the oblation made at the beginning of His life. It was deferred till the thirty-third year of His age, the time appointed by the Father for His immolation and death; and accomplished on Mount Calvary, where that sacred flesh which He had taken from Adam was sacrificed to God.

There, as a victim on the altar of the Cross, Jesus Christ was put to death by the Gentiles outside Jerusalem; thus fulfilling, as we have said, the type of the goat which was driven beyond the limits of the camp, led into the desert and abandoned, as excommunicated, to the wild beasts. For the sins of the people, which had been confessed over it, were by certain imprecations laid thereon, and it was then driven into the desert, to be devoured by the wild beasts. No one

touched it; and such was the horror in which it was held, that even he who led it into the desert remained excommunicate until he had been purified.

Thus was Jesus Christ, the Lamb and victim of God, *Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi... in quo posuit Deus iniquitates omnium nostrum*, charged with the sins of the world which God had laid upon Him and abandoned to the beasts, that is the Gentiles, as is said in Scripture, "Give not to the beasts those who adore and praise thee." He was led out of the city, *extra castra*, where He died by an act detestable and excommunicate. It is thus that the sacrifice of the Cross is truly the antitype of that of the scapegoat.

The fourth part was the consumption of the sacrifice. The body of the Incarnate Son was not consumed by fire, but the consumption was effected by the glory of God, the reality represented by the fire; for, as we have seen, the fire which consummated the ancient sacrifices was only a type of the glory of the Lord.[1]

The spiritual Jews knew that the victim should be consumed in the worthiest manner possible, for besides the command of God to consume it by fire, they knew that fire was the symbol under

[1] Levit. iv. 24.

which God was hidden;[1] but only Christians know by faith the true fulfilment of the figure in the glorious Resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ; — the consummation of the adorable victim in the truth which was symbolized by the fire. For after the immolation of His body on the Cross, after the destruction of His mortal life, it still remained necessary that all traces of mortality in the wounds He had received, all disfigurement, all that He still retained of lowly and earthly, all resemblance to the body of sin and of the infirmity of the children of Adam, should be entirely effaced, and absorbed in glory.

Thus the body of Jesus Christ as victim was consummated and glorified in His Resurrection. *Surrexit a mortuis per gloriam Patris.*[2] He was raised by the divine fire of the glory of the Father; by it was consummed all that in His body, mortal and dead upon the Cross, was unworthy of the body of God. In the sacrifices of the Old Law the victim was burnt by fire, in order that it might be, as it were, changed and transformed into God, and by nothing in nature could this be better represented than by fire, which was the symbol of God; but in the sacrifice of the

[1] Deut. iv. 24.
[2] Romans iv. 41.

New Law, which is incomparably more perfect, being no longer a type but the reality, it has been effected in such a manner that the victim has been changed, not into the symbol of God, but into the very glory of the Godhead, yet without losing anything of the reality of His human nature. By the Resurrection this sacred victim has been freed from all that clung to it of low and earthly. It has been clothed and penetrated by glory such as becomes the only Son of the Father; it has no longer any life except for God; and placed in the bosom of God, has entered into a state wholly divine. According to these forcible expressions of St. Hilary: *Ne ex parte Deus sit, sed totus Deus.... Dum homo et Deus, jam Deus totus est*,[1] and of St. Ambrose: *Verbum caro factum est, ut caro fieret Deus.*[2] And elsewhere, *tunc* (before the Resurrection) *secundem carnem homo; nunc per omnia Deus: nunc enim secundem carnem jam non novimus Christum.*[3]

[1] Hilary, l. 11, *De Trin.* n. 40, et 42.
[2] Ambrose, l. 1, *De Virgin*, c. 3.
[3] Lib. *De Fid. Resurr.* n. 91.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE COMMUNION OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST.

In the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the communion and the consummation may be regarded as one inasmuch as they differ only in form. For the consummation which followed upon the loss of His mortal life was the destruction of the remains of His mortality and the infirmities of the flesh, by His entrance into that glorified life which properly belonged to Him as Son of God, while the communion is the enjoyment of that life in the bosom of the Father.

To understand this, we must consider that God the Son entered, by His Incarnation, upon a life foreign to His Divine Nature. His body, which bore the likeness of Adam, and was subject to the penalty of sin, being unworthy of the Son of God, whose life must be altogether divine. This may be seen from the difference between His eternal Generation and the mystery of the Incarnation. In the former the Father begets His Son, gene-

rating Him in His own bosom to dwell there eternally. In the Incarnation, He begets this same Son in the bosom of the Blessed Virgin Mary, giving Him a mortal life, and a body bearing the likeness of sinful flesh not destined to last for ever; for this temporal birth, so replete with humiliations, entitles Him none the less to a new life worthy of Him, upon which He enters by the mystery of the Resurrection.

It is by this mystery, then, that the Son of God enters upon a life which is proper to Him as being worthy of His greatness: He enters into the bosom of the Father, to dwell there for ever. We may say that in the Incarnation the Son of God is born Son of Man, and that in the Resurrection the Son of Man is born Son of God, according to the words of St. Paul.[1] "Concerning his Son, who is born to him of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Now this return, this new entrance of the Son of God into the bosom of His Father, is called communion, inasmuch as by virtue of this mystery Jesus Christ is wholly in the bosom of the eternal Father, conformably to the prayer which He offered

[1] Romans i. 3.

on the eve of His death: "Father, glorify me with the glory which I had in thee before the world was."[1]

Here we find the reality of that communion which the Jews believed God to have in their victims, when they conceived that He participated and communicated in the sacrifice by receiving the odour of it; and while their chief intention, in eating what remained, was that of entering into communion with God by this participation in the victim. It was a figure, the true fulfilment of which was reserved for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, when, after the destruction of all that was mortal and terrestrial, He was, by His Resurrection, wholly consummated in God. Received into the bosom of the Father, He is, as it were, eaten by Him, — if one may speak thus in reference to a thing so wholly spiritual and divine.

For although God is Pure Spirit and perfectly simple, we cannot apprehend Him as such, therefore when Holy Scripture treats of God, explaining His works, or describing something which bears analogy to what is done by human beings in the manner proper to them, it ascribes to God the same things which they would find necessary on account of their corporeal and imperfect mode

[1] St. John xvii. 5.

of being. Thus when God is represented as generating His Son it is expressed in this manner, *ex utero genui te* — "from the womb I begot thee;" and when the Second Person is spoken of in quality of Son He is represented to us as being in the bosom of the Father. "The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father."[1] As Word He is said to be in the mouth of the Father. "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High" thus ascribing to God a bosom in order to show us that he is both father and mother in this generation; for the bosom is of the mother and it is the father who begets the child. So also we say in the words of Scripture, that the Son, as His eternal Word, is in the mouth of the Father, because, in man, the mouth is the organ by which speech is formed.

We remark in the second place, that, on the eve of His death, Jesus Christ prayed to His Father to bestow upon Him that glory which He possessed from all eternity in His bosom. He did not ask this for His Divinity, which possessed it always; nor for His soul, which participated in this divine illumination from the first moment of its creation and union with the Person of the Word. It was therefore for His body that He asked it, and

[1] St. John i.

the answer to this prayer He received at the moment of the Resurrection, in which He entered so to speak, into the bosom and the mouth of the Father. Thus he says of Himself: "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world. Now I leave the world and return to my Father."[1]

By raising Jesus Christ after His death, the Father entered into communion of His Son as victim, receiving Him into His bosom and bestowing upon Him a new life with the communication of the divine effulgence of glory. For although Jesus Christ, as the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, possessed the divine effulgence and glory from all eternity, in the bosom of the Father as His Son, and in the mouth of the Most High as His eternal Word, yet during His mortal life nothing of it appeared except in His Transfiguration.

His body received this lustre and glory at the moment of the Resurrection, when it was withdrawn by this divine communion into the mouth and bosom of the Father; terms used by the Holy Ghost to convey some idea to our minds of how the Father begets His Son in His own bosom from all eternity; again, in time, in the bosom of Mary, and a third time in the bosom of glory. It is in this third birth

[1] St. John xvi. 28.

that the Father communicates in His Son, and will so communicate eternally: "For the Son of God being once raised from the dead dieth no more; and death shall no more have dominion over Him."[1]

As the priest elevated the victim towards God, so Jesus Christ was raised on the Cross. As the victim seemed to ascend to Heaven in the flame and smoke, so Jesus Christ did really ascend in a cloud, clothed with glory, on the day of His Ascension; and in this state of glory He will be eternally the Sacrifice of Heaven; — Sacrifice in reality and in truth without admixture of types or symbols; for all that is in heaven is there without veil, without cloud, in its own proper state.

For the unity of the Church contains, as has been already said, three different churches; the Jewish Church, which had types only and knew the mysteries of religion in enigmas; the Church of the Saints, which sees the very truth and knows things as they are in themselves, and the Christian Church, which possesses the truth under veils and figures.

For this reason, whenever Jesus Christ appeared after His Resurrection it was under a borrowed form, as that of a pilgrim, or of a gardener; and

[1] Romans vi. 9.

it is likewise one of the reasons why, although in a state of glory, He gives Himself in the Blessed Sacrament under the appearance and figure of bread and wine.

In those sacrifices which were peace-offerings, not holocausts, the priests and those who offered them, participated in the victim after it had been immolated and consummated; so in the sacrifice and peace-offering which Jesus Christ has made, and will eternally make of Himself to God in heaven, the Blessed communicate eternally in the victim in His state of consummation and glory. For, says the holy Council of Trent, the same bread of Angels which we eat now under the sacred veils, we shall eat there without veil.

And there we shall all likewise offer it in sacrifice, for the saints in heaven all are priests. We see this in the Apocalypse,[1] where the twenty-four ancients give thanks to God for having made them kings and priests, consecrated to His divine Majesty. And of the Blessed in general it is said,[2] that they shall be priests of God and of Jesus Christ.

How are they priests? and how do they exercise their priesthood in heaven? It consists in offering Jesus Christ continually to God, as

[1] Apoc. v. 10.
[2] Apoc. xx. 6.

their sole means of rendering to Him the adoration and praise which are His due. In themselves they can indeed adore and love God, and exercise the various acts of religion towards Him; but that is little, and so the divine wisdom has given them a means of supplying for this insufficiency, and of worthily honouring Him. This means is to offer Him His own eternal praise, His Son and His Word, by Whom and in Whom they render to God all the honour which he can render to Himself. Jesus Christ offers Himself to the Blessed Trinity, and along with Himself, all the saints as His members. The saints also offer themselves, and, along with themselves, Jesus Christ their head; by, with, and in Jesus Christ Himself. And this is the marvellous secret by which Jesus Christ, in His Person and in His members, is at once the perfect Victim and the Eternal Priest according to the order of Melchisedech.

This great Sacrifice which Jesus Christ in union with the saints, offers to God in heaven, offering Himself with them, is the same sacrifice which the priest offers on earth, and which the whole Church offers by Him in the holy Mass. For the victim which they offer is the same, being the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ really present, united to God, subsisting in the Word and in this mystery. It is the same Priest who offers it by His ministers;

it is offered upon the same altar, which is the Subsistence or Person of the Eternal Word; in the same temple, namely, in the bosom of the Eternal Father; to the same God on earth as in heaven; rotrile the Victim is not merely the same, but is in the same state of consummation and glory. The only difference is that though as really present here as in heaven, it is not so after a visible manner.

It must be observed that wherever the five parts of sacrifice above explained have been found, the first did not contain the last, but the last contained the preceding ones. The same applies to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When the Paschal Lamb was destined or consecrated to God it was not yet immolated; the immolation did not take place till four days afterwards; and so of the succeeding parts. Likewise, when Jesus Christ offered and consecrated Himself at the moment of His conception, as victim to the eternal Father for our sins, He was not yet immolated; when He was put to death upon the Cross He was not yet consummated; and although at the moment of His consummation by His glorious Resurrection the Father entered into communion of His Son, yet, according to the natural order, the consummation precedes the communion.

Inversely, the immolation of the Paschal Lamb contained its consecration, for it was the consecrated

victim which was immolated. When it was roasted by fire its consummation contained the two preceding parts; for it was the same lamb consecrated and immolated which was consummated: and the communion, which was effected by manducation, contained all the preceding parts, it being the lamb consecrated, offered, immolated and consummated which was eaten. In like manner, the death of Jesus Christ contained His consecration and oblation; His consummation contained His consecration, oblation and death; and when the saints communicate in Jesus Christ, whether in heaven or upon earth, it is in Jesus Christ consecrated, offered, immolated and consummated, that they communicate; and Jesus Christ will for ever keep in His adorable Humanity this state of consecration, oblation, immolation, consummation and glorification which makes the Eternal Communion of heaven.

There is no difficulty in apprehending that in heaven, Jesus Christ and the saints with Him, are in a state of consecration or appropriation to God; that they continually offer Jesus Christ and themselves, and that they are consummated in glory.

In the Apocalypse we read that Jesus Christ is there as immolated and in a state of death: "I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the an-

cients, a Lamb as if it had been slain."[1] An author has endeavoured to explain how Jesus Christ can be regarded as in a state of death in heaven and in the Mass.

Death, he says, being the privation of this present life, when Jesus Christ rose again He remained deprived of this mortal and passible life, and as he then was and eternally will be, deprived of this present life, He may be said, in a sense, to be in a state of death. But the loss of a mortal and a passible life which has been exchanged for one immortal, impassible and glorious, can hardly be called a state of death, and it is better to accept the explanation of St. Thomas and other theologians on this subject. The marks of His wounds, which Jesus Christ retains in heaven, suffice of themselves to justify our saying, in the language of Scripture, that He is there as if He had been slain, — *tanquam occisum*. The perpetual oblation as of a victim once immolated, His own thanksgiving offered to the Father for His deliverance from death, the praises of the saints for the mystery of Redemption, are so many monuments of His death which retrace its history, and preserving it in glorious remembrance render it ever present to the Blessed.

[1] Apoc. v. 6.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE DIFFERENCE WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS, THAT OF THE MASS, AND THAT OF HEAVEN.

The Church of Jesus Christ militant on earth and the Church which reigns in heaven, are not two, but one and the same Church; and ought consequently to have but one priesthood and one sacrifice.

In the Mass, which is the sacrifice of the Church militant, Jesus Christ exercises the same priesthood and offers the same sacrifice as he does in heaven, with this difference, that the communion which the saints have in Him is uninterrupted and eternal, whilst ours is daily and transient, because here we are subject to the vicissitudes of time and the necessities of this life; in heaven there is no duration but eternity, no occupation but sacrifice and its eternal communion. In heaven the saints communicate in joy with God and Jesus Christ; because they

see Him face to face, and as He is. Here we see Him in the Holy Eucharist with the eyes of faith only, and communicate without the joy of seeing Him, although He is truly present: *videmus nunc per speculum et in aenigmate.* Under the Law there were figures without reality while we have the reality under figures, to serve for the exercise of our faith which regards only things unseen.[1] In heaven, the abode of joy and light, we shall have the same truths disclosed and without veils.

Is the sacrifice of the Mass then the same as that of the Cross? — We answer that the sacrifice of the Mass is the same as that of the Cross, inasmuch as the one contains the other; for it is Jesus Christ immolated on the Cross who is present on the altar after the consecration, and is there offered as having been immolated for us. He has in the Mass the state of death which the Jews inflicted upon Him in His crucifixion, inasmuch as He there offers Himself as once immolated on the Cross; and it is in memory and in virtue of that immolation that He is offered by the Church. This state of immolation and death is moreover shown and represented by the mysterious separation of His body and blood

[1] Hebrews xi.

under the different species of bread and wine separately consecrated; nevertheless the divine Victim is no longer there in the likeness of the flesh of sin, but in glory and immortality.

If you ask whether in the Mass there is effusion of blood as on the Cross, we answer that there is effusion of the same blood as to the substance, but it differs inasmuch as it has been renewed by the resurrection. According to the testimony of St. Luke, [1] this effusion was made at the last supper; for the Greek words express a present effusion of the chalice; τό ποτήριον τό ἐκχύμενον. It is not a visible effusion from the veins of Jesus Christ, as on the Cross; it is made in the mouth and in the heart of the communicant, but it is a real effusion, mysterious, sacramental, sacrificial and sanctifying.

We have an excellent type of this under the Law, when Moses, treating of the covenant between God and the people of Israel, killed twelve calves, the blood of which he put into twelve vessels. Then, having proposed to the people the law of God, with the rewards promised to those who should keep it faithfully and the punishments reserved for those who should violate it, the people having accepted the covenant and engaged

[1] St. Luke xvii. 20.

to keep it, saying: We will observe all that the Lord has commanded, and be wholly obedient to Him, Moses sprinkled them with the blood from the twelve vessels saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you."[1]

Our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled this type in the covenant which He made with His Church. On the eve of His death, after he had given His body to His Apostles, he took the chalice and said to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the new testament which is shed for you, drink ye all of it." As if he said: I do not sprinkle you to-day with the blood of calves, as Moses once did the people, when he established a figurative covenant between My Father and your fathers; but I make a new and real covenant with you and with My Church: and I give you My own blood, not by sprinkling to wash you outwardly, as did the blood of those calves, but that you may drink it and receive it within you, and that your hearts may be sanctified by a real, actual, interior sanctification.

We communicate in this victim in the Mass, where the same Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, is received by us in the holy Sacrament. He is there living, no longer with the life which

[1] Exodus ii. 7.

he took from his Mother upon earth, but with the new and glorious life which he received in heaven from His Father — a life beyond comparison nobler and more holy, communicated by the Father in His own bosom in raising Him from the dead.

From this dwelling of Jesus in the bosom of the Father it follows that the priest consecrates in the bosom of the eternal Father and evokes Jesus Christ by the same action and the same power by which His Father raised Him to life.

The first proposition is evident, for Jesus Christ comes forth no more from the bosom of His Father. He is in the glory of the Father even on our altars; and as by the consecration He is made really and truly present, though sacramentally, that is, under the appearances of bread and wine, He is necessarily in the bosom of the Father, which is the abode of His glory and the origin of His immortal life; for where the Son is, immortal and glorious, there is the bosom of God His Father.

The second proposition is also clear; for the priest is only an instrument in the production of Jesus Christ, and the power of the instrument is not other than that of the principal cause. Now this power of the Father, raising Jesus Christ from the dead and making Him enter glorious into His bosom, is the cause of His being in this state wherever He is, and consequently the priest who

produces Him does so by this same power and in the bosom of the Father. Nor should this amaze any one, for the bosom of the Father is not attached to one place; and wherever the Father is He begets His Son, and begets Him in His own bosom.

We cannot say conversely that Jesus Christ is sacramentally in the bosom of the Father; for He is sacramentally only under the appearances of bread and wine, by the consecration; so truly that, where the species are not found, He is not present sacramentally though He is so really; and the species not being in the bosom of the Father the Son is not there sacramentally.

There were no sacrifices of propitiation, properly so called, in the Old Law, although Scripture gives them this name. Thus we find[1] that God, by the mouth of the Prophet, calls the ministers of His wrath His "sanctified ones," although being sinners they were not sanctified in themselves, but were destined and prepared by Him to execute His vengeance, and to serve in this manner for the sanctification of His holy name in the persons of those whom He chastised, or purified by punishment. *Mandavi sanctificatis meis, et vocavi fortes meos in ira mea.* The ancient sacrifices were sacrifices of wrath, in which was manifested

[1] Psalm iii. 3.

what was due to sinners, and what the anger of God would have done to them had not His mercy substituted a victim for them; but they present nothing calculated to appease the anger of God, or to satisfy His justice, and if they are sometimes called sacrifices of propitiation it is that they were so by the good pleasure of God, not on account of the victims. In other words, God willed of His mere goodness that the sins of men should be effaced and everything destroyed that was opposed to Him; and it pleased Him thus to manifest His holiness, mercy, and clemency. They were moreover called sacrifices of propitiation as being a type and promise of the true sacrifice of propitiation.

This one true sacrifice is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, because He alone can be offered to God; and it is so perfect that each several part forms a complete sacrifice, containing in itself all the requisite conditions. This is evident in the sacrifice of the Cross and in that of the Mass, which are in themselves true and perfect sacrifices, although forming at the same time parts of the complete sacrifice of our Lord. Thus the sacrifice of the Cross is the immolation of the victim, while that of the Mass the communion of the same.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW THE PARTS OF SACRIFICE ARE FOUND IN THAT OF THE CROSS; AND ITS DIFFERENCES FROM THAT OF THE MASS.

In the sacrifice of the Cross we find at least four of the five parts of sacrifice. There is the sanctification of the victim; for Jesus Christ, who is the victim, was sanctified from the moment of the Incarnation: — a sanctification which lasts for ever, renewed a few hours before His death by the words, "I sanctify myself for them."[1] The oblation is plain; *Oblatus est quia ipse voluit;* the immolation is also evident.

There remains the communion: and assuredly this adorable sacrifice was received by God as a holocaust of the sweetest odour that ever had been offered. What had been said figuratively of the sacrifice of just men, — *odoratus est Dominus odorem suavitatis*, was now actually fulfilled: God commu-

[1] St. John xvii.

nicated, in the sacrifice of His Son, and communicated alone, as in the true holocaust consummated for Him alone by the fire of the victim's own burning love. The time for the communion of the Church had not yet come; although in a certain sense the Blessed Virgin, with the beloved Apostle and the women who stood by the Cross, were present to receive, as by an anticipated communion, a first participation in the sacrifice in the person and name of the Church of the just. After the same manner one may see in the good thief the representative of all sinners, and say that he first communicated, in the name of all, in this sacrifice of universal expiation.

But these were exclusively interior communions, and an exterior sacrifice, such as was that of the Cross, required also an exterior communion. And as, on the side of God, such an exterior communion is found in the resurrection of His Son, His victim, whom after three days He glorified in His bosom, shedding over His risen body His own glory; so on the side of the people or of the Church, the exterior communion follows later in the union with this bloody sacrifice of the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass, which is the communion and application of the sacrifice of the Cross. For the Mass does not apply an effect of the sacrifice of the Cross but the sacrifice itself; yet more, it is the

same sacrifice as that of the Cross, the same Victim being therein offered. It would nevertheless be incorrect to say that the sacrifice of the Cross is repeated in the Mass, but rather that the same is offered in a different, unbloody manner, in order that we may participate and communicate in the bloody sacrifice. There are, besides, some other differences.

On the Cross, Jesus Christ appeased the anger of God by His blood; and by bearing the penalty of sin and the curse due to sinners He made satisfaction to the divine justice. He there expiated the sin and merited the salvation of the world. But the sacrifice thus accomplished did not yet actually give to men the graces and blessings of which it is the source; the expiation which Jesus Christ worked for sin is the prelude by which He prepares and disposes us for the reception of these benefits. The expiation was made by His blood and His death, but the grace of Jesus Christ is communicated and His Spirit shed abroad in our hearts by Baptism and the other sacraments, especially the holy Eucharist, which contains the virtue and perfection of all the others; and this is the fruit of the Communion of the sacrifice of the Cross.

Thus the sacrifice of the Cross is the sacrifice of redemption and of impetration; it merits all

but applies nothing; while the sacrifice of the Mass is the sacrifice of application and sanctification; it gives and applies all but merits nothing.

The sacrifice of the Cross is for all; therefore it was accomplished *extra castra,* outside Jerusalem and the Temple; the sacrifice of the Mass is for the faithful, and the Church alone, *pro vobis et pro multis* — for you and for many: Mass cannot be said for the excommunicated.

The necessity we are under of participating in the sacrifice of the Cross and communicating in the victim there offered for us, clearly demonstrates the necessity for the sacrifice of the Mass; this being the basis and only means of our salvation. True, Jesus Christ removed the hindrance to our sanctification when He delivered himself to death for our sins. Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, He abolished it entirely, fastening it to His Cross. But, as a participation in the fruits of the ancient sacrifices was effected by eating the victim, i. e. by an actual manducation, like the sacrifice of which it formed a part; so in order to be sanctified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and to participate in the victim which He offered upon the Cross, namely, His Body and Blood, we must, according to His own words, eat and drink them:

"Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood ye shall not have life in you."[1] And since the sacrifice is at the same time exterior and interior, the communion, which forms a part of it should be both corporeal and spiritual. We must communicate in the victim, receiving it truly and really, according to the glorious and impassible state in which it at present exists, but under sensible and corporeal signs, proportioned to our state in this life. It must be eaten by a sacrificial manducation, being made present in the mode in which it is to be received; that is, a mode spiritual, impassible, and invisible, but under corporeal and sensible signs: and this pertains only to the sacrifice of the Eucharist, and to sacramental communion of the Catholic Church.

Here we see how futile is the objection of heretics who infer from St. Paul's words on the unity of the oblation of Christ, "By one oblation he has perfected for ever those whom he has sanctified,"[2] that no other sacrifice is required than that of the Cross, attributing to it alone the consummation and perfection of those who are sanctified. For these words do not refer to the sacrifice of the Cross. So far indeed from having consummated

[1] St. John vi. 54.
[2] Hebrews x. 14.

the sanctification of men by His immolation on the Cross Jesus Christ had not even begun it; having by His death simply removed the impediment of our sins, by reason of which we had become unworthy of justification. This justification is the beginning of our sanctification. After His Resurrection, having entered by glory into the final perfection and consummation of His sacrifice, He has sanctified us by the communion and participation of His new life. "For all we who are baptized in Jesus Christ are baptized into His death. For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we may walk in newness of life."[1] Words which plainly indicate the different effects of His death and Resurrection; showing that as it is by the sacrifice of the Cross that Jesus Christ has redeemed us, so it is by His Resurrection, and by the Eucharistic Sacrifice and communion which correspond to it, that He sanctifies us. "He was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification."[2]

St. Paul's meaning, therefore, is plainly that by one sole oblation, taken in its fulness, and by

[1] Romans vi. 3.
[2] Romans iv. 25.

one only sacrifice, of which the consecration began with the mystery of the Incarnation to continue for ever, the immolation took place on the Cross, the consummation and communion at the Resurrection; by this one sacrifice Jesus Christ has perfected for ever those whom He has sanctified.

By a single oblation Jesus Christ has effected the sanctification of men; but this oblation must be taken in its full extent, as a perfect sacrifice, complete in all its conditions and parts and not in the immolation alone, which in the ancient sacrificial types was esteemed the least important part. This appears from the division of offices between the Priests and the Levites. The Levites, who were not Priests, were charged with slaying the victims, an office not prohibited to laymen who it is probable killed the Paschal Lamb themselves; the nobler parts of the sacrifice were performed by the priests as persons of higher dignity, while the high-priest alone in costly robes, and only once a year, carried the blood of the victim, which was to expiate the sins of the people, into the Holy of Holies. This figure shows plainly what is greatest and most worthy in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, namely His entrance into heaven bearing His own victim for the perfection and consummation of our salvation.

It is still easier to find in the Mass all the conditions and parts of a true and perfect sacrifice. First, the consecration appears, for the body of Jesus Christ is the same which was sanctified and consecrated from the moment of the Incarnation, and in a still more perfect manner at the Resurrection, by which it entered into a more perfect state, higher, holier, more absolutely consecrated to God.

The oblation is equally apparent: that oblation first made in the bosom of His most holy Mother at the moment of His Incarnation; repeated and manifested in the temple; perfected on the Cross; continued in the Mass, and destined to exist eternally in heaven. It is the same oblation, but with this difference that in the Incarnation it was hidden in the Blessed Virgin; in the Temple veiled under His Childhood; on the Cross under a murder; in the Mass it is clothed with signs, while in heaven it is without veil, without signs, in glory.

If, then, there is in the Mass an oblation of the body of Christ it must be sacrifice, for, according to St. Paul, there is one only oblation, which is sacrifice. Now the words of our Lord, as given by the Evangelists, point clearly to an oblation of the body of Christ in the Mass. "This is my body, which is given for you." Here is

evidently an oblation of the body of Jesus Christ made, not to the Apostles but to God for them. "This chalice is the new testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you;" or, according to the Greek, is shed for you. Here is blood shed then for the Apostles, for the remission of sins; a shedding of blood which precedes that on the Cross.

We see by these words that there are two offerings of the body of Jesus Christ; one to God for the world, QUOD PRO VOBIS DATUR — *which is given for you* — the other to the world for God, ACCIPITE ET COMEDITE — *take ye and eat.* The first is the sacrifice; the second is the communion of the sacrifice. Remark also that these words of the Evangelists are all sacrificial terms.

Lastly, the oblation exists much more expressly in the Mass than on the Cross; for on the Cross it does not appear, nor do we read anywhere in the Gospels that our Lord offered Himself upon the Cross. On the contrary, there appears only a murder and a sacrilege, the oblation being hidden under the horror of the crucifixion. It is St. Paul alone who has since taught us the oblation which Jesus Christ made of Himself on the Cross: whereas, at the institution of the Eucharist and sacrifice of the Mass, our Lord says plainly that He is offered for His Apostles and

for many, and that at the very time He was speaking.

There is therefore oblation of the body of Christ in the Mass; a real oblation though veiled under signs. It is the mode of sacrifice which suits the present state of the Church, in which realities are joined to figures.

There is likewise an immolation of Jesus Christ in the Mass, not after a bloody manner but by a sacramental and mysterious state of death following from immolation. Far from being inconsistent with the Ressurrection it is in a manner contained therein, as has been more than once explained. He is truly in the Mass the Lamb slain. He is there in a state of death, having no longer the life which He had on earth, besides that in other ways stated by theologians He shows no exterior signs of vital power, nor uses the organs of His body.

We find likewise in the Mass the consummation or burning of the sacrifice, our Lord risen and glorious being there present; for though He is present as a victim immolated, the sacrifice requiring the death or destruction of the victim, His state is none the less risen and glorious. Jesus Christ there gives himself an entire victim, consummated and perfected by a burning which neither consumes nor destroys the integrity of

His body; which we do not find in the sacrifices of the Law, imperfect and defective in this as in many other points.

Lastly, the communion is manifested in the sacrifice of the Mass. God communicates of Jesus Christ as He is present, risen, and glorious; the communion of the priest and of the people is still more evident. In the Mass the Son of God is there, all for us: "Take ye and eat." Him we there receive, we there eat; He is exposed there for all, and the adorable Sacrament is even reserved for the communion of the sick, for whom It is the salutary viaticum which takes them from this life to the life of heaven. This consolation is reserved for the children of the Catholic Church.

From all we have said, it is plain that the sacrifice of the Mass is truly the sacrifice of the New Law, having many names, and among these that of Eucharist. This sacrifice establishes the priesthood of the new Law, and gives us Jesus Christ, the Eternal Priest according to the order of Melchisedech. It is the same sacrifice which is offered by the universal Church on earth, and which will be offered eternally in heaven. It is well to bear in mind that the unity of the Church comprises the Jewish, the Christian, and the Celestial; the first presenting types only, the second

realities veiled under signs, while the third possesses the realities unveiled.

Other differences there are between the sacrifices of the Old Law and that of the New. The former were sanctified by the altar; but under the New Law, the visible and material altar is sanctified by the sacrifice.

The ancient sacrifices were carnal and material; ours is in spirit and in truth. In the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ we have the victim of the New Law really and substantially present, but in a state wholly spiritual, as it is by an action wholly spiritual that it is made present on the altar and offered to God.

Formerly sacrifice was offered by fire and the sword, now it is by the Holy Spirit and by the word. *Offerimus vitulos labiorum nostrorum;*[1] "the victims of our lips". This text may be understood of the Eucharist, for under the New Law the word is the instrument of sacrifice, thus taking the place of the sword of Aaron and of the fire. *Vitulos* stands for victims, according to a figure common in Holy Scripture, which gives the part for the whole, the species for the genus, young bulls being one species of victim; — victims

[1] Osee xi.

of the lips, because sacrificed and consecrated by the word of the priest.

Lastly, this sacrifice is spiritual in respect of the chief Altar and Temple, of which the visible altar and temple are only figures.

Thus we have seen that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is eternal as well as His Priesthood; that this sacrifice begun upon earth will continue for ever in heaven, offered in that blessed eternity by the Church of the Saints united to its adorable Head and consummated in the unity of His Spirit, as an everlasting homage of adoration to the infinite holiness of God.

End of Part I.

PART II

THE SYMBOLISM OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

CHAPTER I.

ALL THAT BELONGS TO THE PERFECTION OF SACRIFICE IS CONTAINED IN GOD AND REDUCED TO HIS UNITY.

God, who is the sovereign and primal Unity accomplishes all his works in unity; and brings them all at last to His own unity, as our Lord teaches in the sublime prayer which He offered between the institution of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the accomplishment of that of the Cross.[1] The object of sacrifice itself is to reunite men to God by consummating them in His divine unity, and to accomplish this unity, God has effected several others; viz. that of the incarnation of the Word, in which God and man make one sole person in Jesus Christ; that of the Church, in which Jesus Christ and his members make one body: that of the sanctification of man, in which he is made one spirit with God — *qui adhaeret Deo unus spiritus est;* the union of charity, by which

[1] St. John xvii.

the number of the faithful form one heart and one soul; that of the Eucharist, in which we are so closely confused, as it were, with Jesus Christ, as to become, as St. Cyril of Alexandria says, even corporally one thing with him.

In accordance with this same design of reducing all to unity, God has willed that the great sacrifice by which He is to be eternally adored shall be accomplished in His own bosom, and that what ever is necessary for a true sacrifice, all that goes to make up the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, shall be found therein.

These requisites may be reduced to eight, which are found in every true and perfect sacrifice: (1) He to whom the sacrifice is offered; (2) the priest by whom it is offered; (3) the victim offered in sacrifice; (4) he for whom it is offered; (5) the temple in which the sacrifice is performed; (6) the altar upon which it is offered; (7) the fire by which it is consummated and glorified; (8) the end or object of the sacrifice. The sacrifice of which we speak is so holy, so perfect, so divine; and is accomplished in so singular and admirable a unity, that all its parts are found in God, being not only divine but God Himself, or at least subsisting in Him.

God, Who could not adore Himself and yet cannot be worthily adored but by Himself has found

in the Incarnation of His Word, the means of receiving this sovereign worship and adoration, with a sacrifice of infinite dignity; and of finding within His own bosom that by which a homage, infinite, eternal, and wholly worthy of His greatness is rendered to Him. For, in this sacrifice, the priest, the victim, the temple and the altar, the sacrificial fire and the sacrifice, are all adorable, as He to whom the sacrifice is offered is the term of all adoration.

To the Eternal Father, as the only beginning without beginning, cause and origin as well as end of all created being, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is offered; and in accordance with the practice of the Church, and the canons of councils, [1] it is to Him that all prayer, worship, and sacrifice are addressed.

The bosom of the Father is the temple wherein this sacrifice is offered, and will be offered eternally: the incarnate Son of God is the Priest, the Victim, the Altar, and he for whom the sacrifice is offered, according to the various aspect and elements which compose this marvellous union of God and man, the Man-God. For in Jesus Christ, God from all eternity and man in time, we find the Person of the Word and the human spirit and body in which

[1] Conc. Carth. 3, can. 13.

It dwells — *verbum, spiritus et caro;*[1] — and besides His natural body, taken from His Mother, He has received from His Father another, namely, His mystical body, the Church, which forms, together with Himself, one Christ: *Unus homo Christus, caput et corpus.*[2]

Thus, in His Divine Subsistence or Person, Jesus Christ is the altar; by His flesh, united to Him in unity of Person, He is the victim; by His human spirit or rational soul, He is the priest: *hostia quidem secundem carnem; sacerdos vero secundem spiritum.*[3] Considering Him in the mystical body of which He is the head, it is He himself for whom the sacrifice is offered; for He offered himself for the salvation of the Church, which is His body. But even if He had not a mystical body for which to offer sacrifice, He could not dispense himself in His human nature from the obligation, since He owes homage to the greatness, majesty, and holiness of God for His life and all His human perfections. He owes it, likewise, for the communication of the divine perfections which He received from the Father in His Incarnation. For, as St. Augustine says, what

[1] St. Augustine.
[2] St. Augustine, in Psalm cxvii.
[3] St. Augustine, Serm. 130, *De Temp.*

does nature possess, even in the only Son of God, which it has not received?

Lastly, the Holy Spirit is the fire of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; by Whom it is offered, consummated and received by God as an offering the most agreeable that could be offered to Him.

Five of the eight points above enumerated present no difficulty, it is therefore needless to bring forward proofs regarding them; but as all may not so easily perceive that the bosom of the Father is the temple in which the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is offered; that the Person of the Word is the altar, and that the Holy Spirit is the fire by which the victim is consummated and glorified, it will be necessary to explain a little and to offer some proofs of these.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as well as His priesthood belongs in its fulness and perfection to heaven.[1] Hence it need not cause surprise if we seek proofs from the Apocalypse of truths regarding this sacrifice; for the Apocalypse is the Gospel of Jesus risen and the prophecy of the Church of heaven. Although this book is very obscure, and some may accuse us of taking advantage of this to bring forward new and uncommon ideas, yet we may use it in accordance with the custom

[1] Hebrews viii. 4.

of the ancient Fathers and of recent commentators; nor are we less justified in drawing proofs from the Apocalypse about the Church in heaven than in using the authority of the prophecies of the Old Testament regarding the sacrifice of the Church on earth.

CHAPTER II.

ALTHOUGH JESUS CHRIST IS IN SEVERAL SENSES THE TEMPLE OF GOD, NEVERTHELESS THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER IS THE TEMPLE OF THE ETERNAL SACRIFICE.

Jesus Christ is often called the Temple of God, and this for many reasons; but more especially in reference to the plenitude of the Divinity which dwells in Him bodily, and to several interior duties of religion which, during His mortal life, He alone worthily rendered to God, in His soul and body, as in a spiritual temple consecrated by God Himself. We can properly assert that by the Incarnation He is the temple of the Divinity, because in Him always resides the plenitude of the Divinity, as in a body and spirit which has become His own. Christ is also, in a sense, the temple of the Holy Ghost because in Him are hidden all the gifts and graces, all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God. He may even be called the temple of the Church, because all its members are in Him; and it is in

Him they offer to God the sacrifice of their vows, their prayers, their charity, their adoration, and all other duties of religion. He is in this sense the reality figured by the temple of Solomon; as He Himself intimated in His answer to the Jews, who asked for a sign of the authority by which He turned out of the temple those who profaned it: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it; for he spoke of the temple of his body."[1]

But when we consider Jesus Christ as by this same body the victim of God; as priest by His soul or spirit, which is a sacrificing spirit; and that He will offer Himself eternally, with His mystical body, we must conceive another temple in which He offers, and this is the bosom of the Father in which He dwells eternally with all that is united to Him: *Unigenitus qui est in sinu Patris.*[2]

That the bosom of God is the temple of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is it not the meaning of that mysterious vision in which St. John beheld the heavenly Jerusalem surrounded by the brightness of God? After having observed its different beauties, he says that he saw there no temple.

[1] St. John ii. 20.
[2] St. John i. 18.

It is not irrelevant to observe that it was on a Sunday that all those mysteries were shown to St. John. Separated for the faith of Christ from his brethren, and unable to be present in the assembly of Christians at the holy sacrifice which was celebrated on Sunday in the days of the Apostles, it pleased our Lord to give him the joy of finding himself in spirit in the assembly of the elect, and of assisting at the sacrifice of the Church in heaven.

The beloved disciple, who saw the altar, the victim, and the sacrifice, seemed as much surprised to see no temple as Isaac had been long before, when, going with his father to offer sacrifice upon the mountain, he saw no victim. *Templum non vidi in ea,* says St. John;[1] but he quickly saw the reason: *Dominus enim Deus omnipotens templum illius est.* The Apostle saw no temple in the great city of the heavenly Jerusalem because God and the Lamb are the temple thereof.

God and Jesus Christ are the temple of heaven in different ways, according to our Lord's word, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." The same may be said also of His mystical body the Church; she is in God and God in her. As God wholly fills His incarnate Son, in whom He dwells

[1] Apoc. xxi. 22.

substantially, and dwells likewise in the members and whole mystical body by the plenitude of His spirit; so Christ, the head with the members, forms not only the complete and perfect victim of the eternal sacrifice, but also the temple in which it will be eternally offered. Thus we read at the beginning of the same chapter, that when St. John had seen the Church descending from God out of heaven, he heard a voice saying: *Behold the tabernacle of God with men; and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God.*[1]

As the only-begotten Son is in the bosom of the Father, with all the members whom He has made His own by divine adoption intimately united to Himself as parts of His body; and as He is there, the victim of God, received into His mouth and His bosom, through the perfect resurrection of the head and the members,[2] we are compelled to regard this adorable bosom as the true temple, in which the victim, complete in everything, offers itself eternally as a holocaust to God, and renders to Him all the duties of a perfect and divine religion. This is why St. John saw no other temple in heaven. God is Himself

[1] Apoc. xxi. 3.
[2] St. John xvii.

His own temple wherein are found priest, victim, and altar, for the sacrifice of eternity.

We find another proof of the same truth in the eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse, in which we learn the mystery of the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world, to punish the wicked, to recompense the elect, and to enter into the perfect possession of His kingdom.

After the seventh angel had sounded the trumpet, "great voices were heard in heaven saying: The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's, and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever, Amen. And the twenty-four ancients who sit on their seats in the sight of God, fell on their faces and adored God, saying: We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, Who art, and Who wast, and Who art to come; because thou has taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of his testament was seen in his temple, and there were lightnings, and voices, and an earthquake, and great hail. . . ."[1]

The temple of God here spoken of cannot be heaven, since it is said to have been opened in heaven, rather it is the bosom of God; for there

[1] Apoc. xi. 15–19.

is the ark of His covenant: *Et apertum est templum Dei in cœlo, et visa est arca testamenti ejus in templo ejus.*

The ark of the covenant being always regarded as a figure of Jesus Christ, it follows naturally that the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the temple, should be taken as a type of the bosom of the Father, the proper abode of His Son. This is the Holy of Holies which opened in the fulness of time, when the Father sent His Son into the world, and the Son went forth from the Father to become incarnate upon earth:[1] and this same bosom, this temple, this sanctuary, will open again when, at the end of this dispensation, the Father shall send His Son a second time to judge the world, and cause all the elect to enter with Himself into this divine temple where they will partake eternally of the great supper of God; as it is said in the Apocalypse: "Come, gather yourselves together to the great supper of God."[2]

Not to a transitory paschal supper, to be nourished with the bread of God in figure only; nor to the Eucharistic Supper where the bread of God is truly received, but concealed under the sacramental veils; but to the eternal supper, the

[1] St. John xvi. 28.
[2] Apoc. xix.

communion of the table of God,[1] where this living bread is received openly without a veil. This, in the words of St. Ambrose, is "the very substance of life eternal;" an expression in accord with that of St. John, who in his First Epistle calls Jesus Christ the "Word of life," "the life manifested to men;" "the life which was in the Word, and which has come to manifest itself to us;" and in the fifth chapter; "God hath given to us eternal life. And this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son hath not life."

[1] Conc. Trid. Sess. 13, c. 8.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY OF HOLIES A FIGURE OF THE BOSOM OF GOD; THE ENTRANCE OF THE HIGH-PRIEST, A FIGURE OF THE ENTRY OF JESUS CHRIST INTO THAT ADORABLE TEMPLE.

After the testimony of the beloved disciple, who reposed on the heart of Jesus Christ at the very time when He instituted and offered the Eucharistic sacrifice, and to whom the heavenly mysteries were revealed, we have the authority of the apostle who was raised to the third heaven, and who learned there the sublime secrets of the religion of Jesus Christ. The admirable doctrine on the priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, found in the Epistle to the Hebrews and no where else, points out St. Paul as a teacher specially chosen by God to reveal to the Church the science of sacrifice; and, what still further enhances the value of his testimony, he tells the Corinthians that he had learned his doc-

trine from Jesus Christ Himself: *Ego enim accepi a Domino quod et tradidi vobis.*

One point which St. Paul dwells upon is that the entrance of Jesus Christ into the heavenly sanctuary had been prefigured by the entrance of the high-priest into the sanctuary of the temple of Solomon. This was done but once yearly, by the high-priest alone; it was the highest and most perfect act of religion, the one which consummated the sacrifice, because the pontiff entered there with the blood of the victim to offer it to God; in like manner, the entrance of Jesus Christ into the true sanctuary is the perfection and consummation of His sacrifice. Now this sanctuary into which Jesus Christ enters is no other than the bosom of the Father, often called by the name of heaven, because it is in heaven that these mysteries are unveiled, and because it is a manner of speaking consonant with ordinary intelligence.

Jesus Christ did not enter, says St. Paul, into the sanctuary made by the hand of man, which was a figure of the true one; but into heaven itself, and into the sanctuary which is beyond the veil: *Usque ad interiora velaminis;* having been established a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.[1]

[1] Hebrews ix. 24; vi. 19.

To reach this Holy of Holies, the high-priest of good things to come, passed by a greater and more perfect tabernacle than that of Moses, by a tabernacle not made by the hand of man — that is to say, not formed in the ordinary way; — and entered, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood.[1]

St. Paul here applies what He had said at the beginning of the chapter concerning the distinction between the different parts of the ancient tabernacle, or of the temple, into one of which, called the Holy, the priests entered daily, while into the other which was beyond the second veil, and was called the Holy of Holies the high-priest alone entered, and only once a year. As this second part, which was entered through the first, was esteemed much more holy, so the force of the simile requires that the Holy of Holies into which Jesus Christ has entered should be holier and more august than the tabernacle by which He entered it.[2]

If, as some explain it, (vide, the two Glosses, Liranus, the two Commentaries attributed to St. Ambrose and St. Anselm) the tabernacle by which our Divine high-priest entered signifies

[1] Hebrews ix. 11.
[2] Hebrews ix. 11.

heaven, what shall we say of the Holy of Holies into which He has entered once only, if it be not the bosom of the Father, which is truly holier and more august than heaven? And if, with other Fathers and commentators, we understand by this tabernacle the body of Jesus Christ, what can we find holier, more august, and worthy to be called in relation to it the Holy of Holies than the bosom of the Father, the source of all holiness, where the true ark of the covenant is hidden as the ark which typified Him was hidden in the sanctuary behind the second veil? For, once more, the tabernacle by which the priest enters into the sanctuary, and the blood which he bears with him, ought to be less holy than the sanctuary itself; but there is nothing except the bosom of God which can be more holy than the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

This gives occasion to remark a difference existing between the bosom of God and the body of Jesus Christ, though both are termed, in different relations, the temple of God. For during the journey of the Israelites in the desert, and even whilst David was living amid the fatigues of battle, the ark of God had only a tabernacle to dwell in; but after the Chosen People had entered into possession of the promised land and the enjoyment of rest, it pleased God that it

should be placed in a temple, and no longer carried from place to place as during their journey through the desert. Now this tabernacle was a type of the Church on earth, which is on a journey and militant; tents and tabernacles being proper only for travellers and soldiers who have enemies to fight against;[1] while the temple was a figure of the Church triumphant, which enjoys in heaven that perfect peace which is the fruit of victory.

Again, an analogy is found between the tabernacle and the body of Christ during His life militant upon earth, in the fact that He had not yet obtained the victory, nor entered into His state of rest and glory. No longer on the way, He has now entered into His perfect rest; His temple is His Father's bosom, the dwelling of the children of God, the place of rest, the true land of promise, destined for Jesus Christ and His members.

Having heard St. John and St. Paul on this subject, let us now turn to Jesus Christ Himself, and see if we cannot learn from His own mouth what is that temple in which He will eternally offer His sacrifice. We find an indication of what we seek in St. Matthew xxiii. 16, where he says: "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, whosoever swears by the temple, it is nothing;

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm xvi.

but he that shall swear by the gold of the temple, is a debtor. Foolish and blind! for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?"

Jesus Christ taxes the Scribes and Pharisees with folly and want of understanding because they did not see that the temple was greater and holier than the offerings made in the temple; that it is the temple which sanctifies the gifts made to God, and that from it the offerings receive their dignity and worth. But, can heaven be called holier or more worthy of veneration than the victim of our Lord's sacrifice, which is no other than Himself? Or can we conceive any created thing which even approaches His infinite dignity and holiness? On the contrary, we may say confidently, comparing Him with any created temple, *Templo major est hic.* He is greater, holier, more venerable than the temple of Solomon, than earth, than heaven, however they may be renewed at the end of time. The bosom of God the Father is the only temple worthy of Him, as being holier than the Humanity of His Son, which is offered to Him as to the source and principle of all holiness: *Templum quod santificat donum.* This temple it is which indeed sanctifies the victim,[1] which

[1] St. John x. 36.

renders it worthy of Him, and the source of sanctification to His members; by which they become themselves victims of God as parts of His mystical body.

Lastly, wherever the true altar of our religion is, the altar upon which the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ is to be offered, there must be the true temple; for it is in this temple that the altar is placed. But Jesus Christ is Himself the true altar of our great sacrifice, as we shall show presently; and as the bosom of the Father is His proper dwelling, His natural abode, we cannot but conclude that this adorable bosom is the true temple of our religion, regarded in the ultimate perfection destined for it in that blessed eternity which is to crown the consummation of the ages.

When we speak of the bosom of the Father, we must beware of all human comparison. This bosom is nothing corporeal or sensible, nothing different from God Himself, it is therefore nothing less than the secret of the Godhead, the abyss infinite and impenetrable of the substance of the Father. This we learn from St. Augustine: *Et sinus et uterus pro secreto positus est, quid est, ex utero genui te? Ex secreto, ex occulto, de me ipso, de substantia mea; hoc est utero; quia generationem ejus quis enarrabit?*[1]

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm cix.

This is elsewhere called the secret of the face of God. The psalmist says: "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy face."[1] He does not say, Thou shalt hide them in heaven; he does not say, Thou shalt hide them in paradise; he does not say, Thou shalt hide them in the bosom of Abraham. Let us despise all that is not God as being unworthy of us. May God, who puts us in a hidden place during this life, be Himself our place after this life; then we shall be hidden in the face of God. But that God may be our dwelling let us be ourselves the dwelling of God; let Him dwell in us and we shall live in Him; for if we receive Him into our hearts in this world He will receive us into the secret of His face in the world to come.[2]

[1] Psalm xxx.

[2] St. Augustine, in Psalm xxx.

CHAPTER IV.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE ALTAR; VISIBLE ALTARS ONLY FIGURATIVE.

We have now to show that the true altar of sacrifice in heaven is Jesus Christ. We cannot doubt that there is an altar other than that which we see with our bodily eyes, and approach daily; *Est enim quoddam altare....* says St. Augustine,[1] there is on high a sublime and invisible altar, to which sinners cannot draw nigh. He alone has access to it who approaches the altar here in the peace of a good conscience. If he is careful to prove himself at the foot of the altar on earth, he will find life in the altar of heaven. "I will go to the altar of God;" from the holy mountain of God, from His tabernacle, from His Church, I will pass to the sublime altar of God. Oh, what a sacrifice is that which is offered upon this altar! and He Himself who enters there is

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm xlii.

the victim and the holocaust. For what does the prophet intend by this altar of God, if not God Himself; who gives joy to my youth, that is, who perfectly renews all that remains of the old man? This altar is, then, Jesus Christ, the Man-God who says in the Apocalypse[1]. "Behold I make all things new."

This altar is also shown to us in the Apocalypse,[2] where St. John testifies that he saw, under the altar, the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God; having remained steadfast to the end in the confession of His name. This altar of God of which St. John speaks, is Jesus Christ, says Richard of St. Victor; because it is by Him that we offer to the Father the sacrifices of our hearts, of our tongues, of our works, when we are animated by faith. The souls of the saints were seen under the altar, that is, under Jesus Christ as members are under their head, humbling themselves under the all-powerful hand of His grace, to which they acknowledge that they owe their victory; and expecting from Him the last effect of divine adoption, the redemption and resurrection of their bodies. In this consists the justice they demand from God; crying with loud

[1] Apoc. xxi. 5.
[2] Apoc. vi. 9.

voice, that is, sighing with an ardent desire after the perfect reign of Jesus Christ, and asking by zeal for the justice of God, which is the cry of the soul, that sin may be entirely destroyed, and the reign of the prince of darkness be for ever at an end. This text is taken in the same sense, as referring to Jesus Christ, in the commentaries attributed to St. Ambrose and Haimon of Alberstadt, in the ordinary and interlinear glosses, &c.

Jesus Christ is further signified by the golden altar, of which there is mention in Apocalypse.[1] "An angel, not one of the seven who stand before God, appeared to John, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer with it the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints went up before God, from the hand of the angel. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it on the earth, and there were thunders and voices and lightnings." Various commentators refer to Jesus Christ this golden altar, which is raised before the throne of God; among them Andrew of Cæsarea, an ancient commentator on the book of the Apocalypse. He says "This altar is Jesus Christ, who contains in

[1] Apoc. viii. 3, 4.

Himself all the sanctity and authority of the divine ministry, and upon Whom are immolated and offered to God all the victims and sacrifices of the saints."

In the ceremonial for the ordination of subdeacons, we find the same interpretation placed in the mouth of the Bishop, who thus instructs those about to be specially attached to the service of the altar. "Having to receive, my very dear children, the office of subdeacon, attend earnestly to the excellence of the ministry confided to you. See that you fulfil its visible functions with the requisite care and propriety, while you also fulfil the invisible ministry which they represent. For the altar of our holy Church is Jesus Christ Himself, according as St. John witnesses in the Apocalypse, having seen a golden altar before the throne, upon which or by which the oblations of the faithful are consecrated to God. The linen, the adornments, and the corporals of this altar are the members of Jesus Christ, the faithful children of God, by whom the Lord is surrounded, as with vestments and precious ornaments, according to the word of the psalmist: "The Lord has entered into his kingdom. He has clothed himself with magnificence."[1]

[1] Pont. Rom. Or. Subd.

It is then upon this altar that the prayers of the saints, in other words, of the whole Church are laid. From this altar they rise to God, and are received by Him. From this altar the fire is taken, which is to be cast upon the earth; which signifies that it is from the Son of God that the Holy Ghost, represented by the fire, proceeds eternally, and is sent in time upon the earth: "The spirit of truth whom I will send unto you from the Father," to work these wonderful effects of the conversion of the Gentiles in the beginning of the Church, and that of the Jews in the latter days; which things are symbolized by the loud noise, the lightnings and the thunder, of which St. John speaks.

We interpret also of Jesus Christ, the golden altar from the four corners of which St. John heard a voice proceeding. "And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God."[1] This voice commanded the angel to unchain those who should slay the third part of men, and is best understood of that terrible word which shall proceed from the Son of God at the last day, to destroy the wicked from the face of the earth, to condemn the reprobate, and drive the demons into hell.

[1] Apoc. ix. 13.

CHAPTER V.

PROOFS DRAWN FROM THE CANON OF THE MASS AND FROM THE GOSPEL, THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE ALTAR.

In the Canon of the Mass, each word of which must be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, Jesus Christ is also without doubt intended by the sublime altar which is before the majesty of God, and to which the Church asks, that the sacrifice may be carried by the hands of the holy Angel, from the ministerial altar upon which the holy Mysteries are offered.[1]

According to some, Jesus Christ is Himself this angel of God: the Angel of the Great Council, the Angel of peace and of the reconciliation of sinners, the Angel of the Covenant, and mediator

[1] "We humbly beseech thee, almighty God, to command that this sacrifice be carried by the hands of Thy holy angel to Thy sublime altar, standing before Thy divine Majesty."

of the eternal covenant between God and man. It is He who, as priest of the Most High, presents to God the sacrifices and worship of men and brings to men the gifts and blessings of God. The eternal minister thus keeps up that divine commerce of religion by means of sacrifice, in which men offer to God a victim worthy of Him, and receive, by communicating in this victim, all the blessings of heaven as that part of the Canon expresses which we shall explain in the next chapter.

If, according to others, it is really an angel which is here intended, — the angel of sacrifice, it is still Jesus Christ who is represented; in whose name and by whose authority he exercises this function in the sacrifice.

We ought not to wonder that Jesus Christ is called, now the priest, now the victim; the temple and the altar; or that in this place He is called both the altar upon which the sacrifice is offered to God, and the Angel who places the victim upon this altar; for we have shown that He has all these characters according to the different natures and substances which belong to Him. He is priest by His spirit, victim by His body and in His Person or Divine Subsistence He is the altar; inasmuch as the human nature united to Him, subsists only in the Person of the Word.

This truth may deduced from our Lord's own declaration, which we have already quoted to show that the bosom of God is the true temple of the heavenly sacrifice. "Woe to you," He says to the Scribes and Pharisees, "blind guides, who say if a man swear by the altar it is nothing, but if he swear by the gift which is upon the altar he is bound. Fods and blind! for whether is greater, the gift or the altar which sanctifieth the gift?" Here is a truth which we must know in order to understand true sacrifice, viz. that the altar must be holier and more precious than the victims or gifts which are offered upon it: that the victim derives its holiness from the altar; the gift being sanctified by the altar not the altar by the gift. This truth must be absolute, or our Lord would not have called the Scribes and Pharisees blind and foolish for not having understood it, and for making the error a basis of false doctrine.

In the first book of the Evangelical Questions,[1] St. Augustine explains this passage in the same sense, applying it expressly to Jesus Christ, in and by Whom we offer to God the sacrifice of prayer and praise: *Intelligendum templum et altare ipsum Christum; aurum et domun, laudes et sacrificia precum quæ in eo per eum offerimus;*

[1] Quest. 34.

non enim ille per hæc, sed ista per illum sanctificantur. The temple and the altar are to be understood of Jesus Christ Himself, the gold and gifts are the sacrifices of praise and prayer, which we offer in and by Him: for Jesus Christ is not sanctified by these things, but they are sanctified by Him.

If then, Jesus Christ is the altar, with reference to the sacrifices of praise, prayer, and good works which we offer to God by Him, because it is from Him that they receive their sanctification; it is no less true that, regarding Jesus Christ as Himself the victim of His eternal sacrifice in the human nature which He has assumed for this very end, this same Humanity must also have an altar on which to be offered, and from which it derives its holiness. This can be nothing created, and of things divine and uncreated it could only be the Divine Essence, or one of the Three Divine Persons. The Divine Essence does, undoubtedly, sanctify the Humanity of Jesus Christ, but not immediately, since it is not united thereto immediately, but through the Word; besides, this holiness belongs intrinsically to the Word and to His Humanity, and is common also to the other two Divine Persons. Nor does the Person of the Father, or of the Holy Ghost, sanctify, at least Personally, the Huma-

nity of Jesus Christ, for It is not united to Them in unity of Person. It can, then, be only the Person or Subsistence of the Word, to which this humanity is so united as to make, immediately, one sole Person with the Word, upon Whom it is, so to speak, adapted and imposed as on a sacred altar whence it derives its sanctity, its excellence, and all that distinguishes it from the nature of other men. For the Person of the Word is the sanctity of the Humanity of Jesus Christ, by which this victim becomes pleasing to God, and sole object of the Father's complacency; in a word, the true Lamb of God, the only victim worthy of being offered to Him in sacrifice.

CHAPTER VI.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRECEDING TRUTH.

We have seen that the true altar of the great sacrifice is the Person or Subsistence of the Word, that is, of Jesus Christ. It is upon this altar that the victim, His Humanity, was laid in the mystery of the Incarnation; and this, not by a mere presence, or exterior union, but by one so intimate and close that this created nature had no basis, or support, or subsistence, except the Word.

Upon this altar all the parts of the sacrifice are carried out; and what appeared outwardly was there carried out in spirit and in truth; as becomes the sacrifice of the New Law.

By this altar, as already shown, the sanctified victim was separated, not only from things profane, but from all that is holiest among creatures on earth or in heaven.

Upon this altar the oblation was made from the moment of the Incarnation, when the Word offered Himself as a substitute for the ancient victims; and it is for the sake of this altar that the offering has been received by the Father, and accepted in atonement for the sins of the world.

Upon this altar the victim was immolated, and the Cross which bore Him in His death merits to be called an altar only because it represented this invisible altar from which the sacred victim was never separated, even when detached lifeless from the Cross; but will remain for ever united to it, in order to be eternally exposed thereon before and the sovereign majesty of God.

Upon this altar the victim was consummated and sanctified in the Resurrection; nor do we see any external altar on which Christ accomplished the latter part of His sacrifice, of which it is at once the perfection and the completion.

It is upon this altar that the blood of the victim was carried into the invisible sanctuary by Him who is the High-priest, when, returning to His Father, He re-entered as it were into His bosom.

Lastly, it is upon this same altar that the victim, perfected by the union of all its members, will be eternally presented to God; will adore Him, rendering to Him the love, the praise, the

thanksgiving which are His due: and continue for ever this sacrifice in which consists the eternal joy of the Saints.

Then it will be that this altar will be in a condition to be measured, as we find it written in the Apocalypse: "They gave me," says St. John, "a reed, like unto a rod, and it was said to me: Go and measure the temple of God, and the altar and those who adore on it."[1] That alone can be measured which is perfect and has all its dimensions; then one can estimate it, and judge of its value and price. When all who are destined to enter into the bosom of God, the eternal temple, and to adore and sacrifice eternally on this sublime altar which is Jesus Christ, shall have been received there; in other words, when, at the end of ages, the number of the elect shall be filled up and consummated in God, then the heavenly mysteries will have attained their perfection, and the saints will know the worth and value of them. Now we apprehend but very imperfectly what we shall be in eternity. "We are indeed the children of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be."[2]

St. John, to whom on account of his eminent purity and charity the mysteries of heaven were

[1] Apoc. xi. i.
[2] 1 St. John iii. 2.

laid open even in this life, had likewise the privilege of measuring this temple, the altar, and all who adore therein: *Surge et metire templum at altare, et adorantes in eo.* "But leave the court which is outside the temple, measure it not, because it has been abandoned to the Gentiles, and they will tread under foot the holy city."

Jesus Christ, then, is this altar alone worthy to be measured, because His holiness and charity have all possible dimensions; and when God, according to the riches of His glory, shall have perfected us by His Spirit after the inner man, — when Jesus Christ shall dwell fully in our hearts and we in Him, and we shall be rooted and founded in charity — then we shall be able to comprehend with St. John and all the saints, what is the breadth and the length, the height and the depth of this altar; because we shall know the charity of Jesus Christ which surpasses all understanding; being filled with charity and with God Himself, according to the plenitude destined for us by His goodness.

It is by the union of the flesh with the divinity in the Person of the Word, constituting this divine compound, the Man-God, that the victim of His body is sanctified by the altar, which is the Word; and it is by our union with this victim and this altar that we are said to sacrifice in it:

adorantes in eo, according to the Apocalypse. For there is no other altar in which sacrifice is offered. We adore before other altars, we sacrifice upon them; the saints even wait, under the altars where their sacred remains are deposited, for the time of the perfect sacrifice; but to adore God worthily and to offer Him a worthy sacrifice, it is necessary to be in this altar: *in eo*. We must be in Jesus Christ, in the unity of His Body; they only who there adore and sacrifice, merit that their adoration and sacrifice shall be measured; for such only offer in spirit and in truth, and give honour to God.

Moreover, in accordance with this text of the Apocalypse, this adorable altar of which we are speaking is the only one which is in the true temple, the bosom of God, and has never been exposed to the profanation of sinners. All the figurative altars in the temple of Solomon, even the Cross which is the exterior altar of the true sacrifice, have been abandoned to the sacrilegious profanation of the Gentiles, but the divine Person of the Word was not, nor could be, trodden under foot by the Jews or the Romans; even while His holy Human Nature was trodden under foot, pierced with nails, and abandoned to suffering and death.

Lastly, it is from this invisible altar that the

figurative altars derive whatever sanctity they possess; by relation to it they merited a certain degree of veneration, and sanctified the victims offered to God by a legal and exterior holiness. For, apart from this relation, what meaning can be attached to our Lord's declaration, that the altars of the figurative temple were more worthy of consideration than the gifts offered upon them, and that it was by the altar that the victims were sanctified?

But the meaning is plain, if we consider these altars as having a two-fold existence: one natural, according to the material of which they were composed; the other figurative or sacrificial, in relation to the Person of the Word, that sublime and divine altar which they typified. True, as far as their own nature and material are concerned, the gifts and victims offered were nobler and more excellent than the altars, for these were but of stone, while the former were living beings; but, having regard to their spiritual being and figurative dignity, they were endowed with a legal holiness superior to that of the victims: for the latter represented only the Humanity of our Lord, which is itself sanctified by the Word, whilst the altar represents the Word, Who is the subsistence of that Humanity; sustaining, accomplishing, perfecting, and sanctifying it in so wonderful a

manner as to render it a victim truly worthy of God.

It ought to be shown in what manner the altar of the Old Law represents the Person or subsistence of the Word; but to make a detailed application of these types would lead us too far, and would demand a volume apart. It will suffice to touch briefly upon some of the agreements and relations found in them. Thus the altar was of stone; representing in this the Incarnate Word; figured, according to St. Paul, by the rock from which water flowed in the desert; elsewhere He is called the corner-stone.

The hardness of stone is the symbol of the eternity and immutability of the Word; the square shape of the altar figures the firmness and stability of the Son of God.

The four corners of the altar denote the Word Incarnate as the power and virtue of the Father; the strength of Christians and the refuge of sinners.

The anointing of the altar represented Christ's holiness and divinity; for only those persons are anointed who represent God, or hold His place; or things which are destined to some holy use.

Iron ought not to touch the stones of which the altar was made; to typify the impassibility of the Word, Who could not be pierced or

touched by the nails, or the scourges which lacerated His sacred body in His passion.

The stones might not be cut, to express that the Word can receive no adornment or advantage from His creatures, not even from the Human Nature united to Him.

The flesh of the victims laid on the altar and thus united thereto, symbolised the incarnation of the Word, Who united our mortal and passible body to Himself; and upon whom our flesh has been laid, so to speak, not by an exterior union, but by one intimate, substantial, and personal.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT THE HOLY GHOST IS THE FIRE OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST, IN WHATEVER STATE THIS MAY BE CONSIDERED.

The fire which rose from the altar, or came down from heaven, was a symbol of the plenitude of the Godhead which dwelt in Jesus Christ: hence the brightness of glory was spread over His body, when the victim was consummated in the resurrection. Fire also figures the Holy Spirit, with which He was anointed in fulness, and which He sheds abroad in His mystical body. As fire issued from the altar to kindle the victim and make it a holocaust agreeable to the divine Majesty, so from the Son of God the Holy Ghost proceeds eternally: and the Church receives this gift from the Father, out of the plenitude of the Holy Spirit bestowed without measure on Jesus Christ, and diffused by Him in the hearts of the faithful; making them victims pleasing to God.

The Holy Spirit Who came down upon the Church in the form of fire on the day of Pentecost, is, then, the sacred fire by which the perfect victim, Jesus Christ and all His members, will be eternally consummated in heaven; and by Him the eternal sacrifice will be offered to God for ever. In other words the heavenly sacrifice is the sacrifice of charity perfected, of entire justice, consummate holiness, divine unity, eternal praise; and of the consummation of all the elect in God; all which is the work of the Holy Spirit, in us. In whatever state indeed, we consider the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, whether in the bosom of the Blessed Virgin or on the Cross, in the Holy Eucharist or in heaven, it is always the Holy Ghost Who consecrates and consummates It.

With regard to the sacrifice of the Eucharist, the liturgies of both the Latin and Greek Churches attribute to the Holy Ghost the change by which the bread and wine are made the Body and Blood of Christ; in that oblation which the Divine Victim makes of Himself to God, by Himself, by His ministers, and by the Church. "What the Holy Spirit touches is changed and sanctified," says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, from the liturgy of his time, which was the fourth century. Perhaps also, by allusion to the fire which sometimes descended from heaven upon the ancient sacrifices,

we find in some ancient Latin liturgies; "Grant, Lord, that the Holy Spirit, the Consoler, Who, being co-eternal with Thee, co-operates also in Thy benediction, may descend upon these sacrifices". Similar to this is the Secret for Friday in the Octave of Pentecost, in the Roman Missal; "May the sacrifices offered in Thy presence, O Lord, be consumed by the same divine fire by which the Holy Ghost inflamed the hearts of the disciples of Christ Thy Son".

The Paris Missal, which has this Secret for Friday, has another for Monday, in which the Church prays that the gifts upon the altar may be consecrated by the coming of the Holy Spirit: *Munera nostra, Domine Sancti Spiritus sacrentur adventu;* and for Tuesday, "Send, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, Who may make of these gifts Thy sacrament". In the Secret of the Mass of the Blessed Virgin in Paschal time: "Make The Holy Spirit, O Lord, to descend upon these gifts; Whom Thy only Son promised to send after He should have been glorified, and poured so abundantly on the Blessed Virgin and the Church while they were in prayer".

This truth is evident in the light of St. Augustine's teaching that all religion is contained in charity; *non colitur Deus nisi amando;* [1]

[1] Ep. cxx.

that all piety, all true Christian worship, and consequently all sacrifice, at least all that pleases God in sacrifice, is charity; *Quid est pietas nisi Dei cultus? et unde ille colitur nisi charitate.*[1]

The victims and sacrifices offered of old were but types of the sacrifice of charity to be offered one day by the Christian Church, when, through the merits of Jesus Christ, that charity should be shed abroad in the hearts of His people, as foretold by the prophets: the sacrifice of charity which unites us to God, and to our neighbour to bring Him to God. This was what our Lord intended by saying that these two commandments contained all the Law and the Prophets: viz., that everything which God had ordained regarding the sacrifices of the tabernacle or the temple, all the ceremonies and observances of the old Law, are summed up in the love of God and our neighbour.

The sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered on earth to His Father, holy in all its parts, is the sacrifice of His charity; and this excessive and infinite charity, by which He delivered Himself to God for us, could alone repair the violation of charity by which Adam and his posterity had made themselves debtors to the justice of God.

[1] Ep. xxix.

On this account St. Paul does not mention the sacrifice of Jesus Christ without, at the same time speaking of His charity; that we might understand that what pleased God in the sacrifice of His Son, was not so much His fasting, His sweat, His labours; His prayers and the laceration of His sacred body by the scourge, the nails, the thorns; the effusion of His blood, or all that was done from without; — not even His death itself, but the immense charity with which He offered it all to God; shedding His blood and giving up His life for sinners. "If the blood of goats and oxen", says the Apostle, "sanctifies the unclean, — by giving them an exterior purity, — how much more shall the blood of Jesus Christ, who, by the Holy Spirit, offered Himself to God an unspotted victim, purify our consciences from dead works, and make us render a true worship to the living God".[1]

Again, "I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered himself for me".[2]

He repeats the same truth, writing to the Church of Ephesus, more generally and in sacrificial terms: "Jesus Christ has loved us, and has delivered himself for us; an oblation and sa-

[1] Hebrews ix. 14.
[2] Galat. ii. 20.

crifice to God for an odour of sweetness ".[1] " Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it ".

This same oblation being continued in the sacrifice of the Mass, it is still the work of the Holy Spirit and His charity; and this same sanctifying Spirit is invoked by the priest upon the bread and wine, which are the matter of the sacrifice: *Veni sanctificator et benedice hoc sacrificium tuo sancto nomini preparatum;* in order to participate in this spirit of sacrifice, and to offer and sacrifice Jesus Christ by the same Spirit by Whom He is offered and sacrificed to the Father.

[1] Ephes. v. 2; and v. 15.

CHAPTER VIII.

BY CHARITY ALL THAT THE CHRISTIAN SAYS OR DOES, ON EARTH OR IN HEAVEN, IS A TRUE SACRIFICE. IN HEAVEN THE ENTIRE CHRIST IS PERFECTED AND CONSUMMATED BY CHARITY.

Whatever Christians do in order to unite themselves to God by a holy union, all that is referred to this sovereign good, which alone can make us happy, becomes, through this same Spirit, a true sacrifice. Man himself, consecrated and devoted to God, is a sacrifice, inasmuch as he dies to the world in order to live to God alone.

Our body is a sacrifice when we mortify it by temperance, consecrating it to the service of God as an instrument of virtue and justice. "I beseech you," says the Apostle, "by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God".[1] And if the body, which is but the instrument of the soul, is

[1] Romans vii. 1.

a sacrifice when the use made of it is referred to Him, how much more the soul, when offering herself to God burning with the fire of divine love, she despoils herself of all worldly desires, renewed by her submission to His divine will?

If the use which the soul makes of all the things of the world, of the body and of herself, for God, is sacrifice so also is the exercise of the moral and theological virtues; of faith, hope, justice, temperance, mercy, when referred to Him. For even mercy exercised towards one's neighbour, says St. Augustine, is not a sacrifice unless it be done with reference to God. Now, one can do nothing for God, nor refer anything to Him, nor practise true virtue, unless by charity. "Virtue itself," according to St. Augustine, "is nothing else than the love of God, and all the different virtues which we are accustomed to distinguish, are but different movements and impressions of this love dominant in the heart; love, not of created things but of God alone, i.e. of the sovereign good, the sovereign wisdom, the sovereign peace. *Nihil omnino esse virtutem affirmaverim, nisi summum amorem Dei.*[1] We may then truly say of the sacrifice of christian virtues, what St. Augustine says of all visible sacrifice; viz.

[1] St. Augustine, *De Mor. Eccl. Cath.* c. 15.

that it is a sacrament, that is to say a sacred sign, of the invisible sacrifice which is that of charity.

But in heaven, where there are no veils because truth is directly present to the spirit; no more signs because the heart of man speaks to God only, Who penetrates its depths, the Christian no longer needs to borrow from words, types, or external sacraments in order to testify his submission, dependence, and love; to attest that he recognizes God as the beginning and the end of all created being, or to render homage to His attributes. In heaven, the Church of the just made perfect, charity alone adores God and praises Him; charity alone offers sacrifice, and constitutes the whole of religion and worship.

There Jesus Christ with all the elect, His members, who will be of one heart and one soul in an incomparably higher sense than was said of the first Christians, will form the eternal holocaust which the Divine fire of the Holy Ghost will consume without destroying, on the altar of the Divine Word, in the temple of God, the bosom of the Father.

This is the teaching of St. Augustine, who says [1] that all the redeemed city which is the Church and company of the saints, is the universal

[1] *Civit. Dei*, l. x. c. 6.

sacrifice offered to God by the High-priest Who likewise offered Himself for us in His Passion; that we might be members of the same august head, according to that form of a servant with which He had clothed Himself. For it is His human nature which He offers to God; in it He was offered; because it is according to this Humanity that He is our Mediator, Priest, and Sacrifice. He says further, that the Christian Sacrifice consists in the union of all, in one body, in Jesus Christ. This is what the Church so often effects through the sacrament of the altar known to Christians, in which she learns that she is herself offered in the oblation she makes to God. Jesus Christ is the priest, since it is He who offers the sacrifice; and He Himself is the sacrifice which He offers. He has been pleased to figure this in the daily sacrifice of the Church; for since she is the body of this adorable head, she learns from Him to offer herself by Him.[1]

It is love which begins this sacrifice on earth, and by love it is perfected and consummated in heaven, by the perfecting of the body of Christ through the consummation of the union between the head and the members; so reducing them to the Divine unity that they become one by the

[1] *Civit. Dei*, l. x. c. 20.

Holy Spirit the substantial love of the Father and the Son, by Whom the Father and the Son are One in a manner infinitely more perfect. It is of this sacrifice that Jesus Christ spoke when He prayed: "Holy Father, keep in my name these whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we also are, ... that they all may be one as thou Father art in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. . . . I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. . . . that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them". [1]

[1] St. John xvii.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW ALL THE PARTS AND CONDITIONS OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST WILL BE PERFECTED IN HEAVEN; AND FIRST OF THE SACRIFICATION OF THE VICTIM.

We have seen that the sacrifice of heaven is the sacrifice of charity. Begun here on earth it will be perfected and finished in all its parts in God, Who is Charity; in the temple, on the altar, by the eternal fire; that is, in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost: and by this same charity the different parts of the sacrifice already enumerated will receive their perfection.

This is evident in regard of the first part, the sanctification of the victim, or its separation from all that is profane. For the entire Christ, that is, Jesus and His Church, the Head and the members, will be perfectly separated from the world and from all use inconsistent with the holiness of God.

Christians will be delivered from that subjection to the body, under which they sigh and groan

inwardly, waiting for the effects of the divine adoption in the redemption and deliverance of even their bodies, by the destruction of concupiscence and the perfect reign of charity. St. Paul calls this the glorious liberty of the children of God.[1]

No longer exposed to the envy of the Jews and the fury of the Gentiles; the attacks of heretics, or the temptations of evil spirits, the Church will enjoy perfect and unalterable repose: God having put under her feet all the enemies who fight against her on earth, she will reign undisturbed in eternal peace. Nor will she have anything more to fear on the part of her own children who so often tear one onother to pieces in her bosom, and break the unity of the body of which they are the members; for all the members of the Church will be lovers of peace. The only bond will be that of charity; and this bond, uniting the elect to God and to one another, all will rejoice in that supernal peace which constitutes the beatitude of everlasting life. For the peace of the celestial city, as defined by St. Augustine, is a perfect union for the enjoyment of God and of one another, in God and for God.[2]

[1] Romans viii.
[2] *Civ. Dei*, l. 19, c. 13.

As fruits of this peace creatures will no longer be subject to vanity, that is, to a vain and criminal usage, contrary to the orders of God; for men will no longer use the things they ought to enjoy, nor enjoy those which they ought only to use.

Lastly, Jesus Christ, who suffers in His members until the end of the world, will be no more exposed to humiliation or suffering; withdrawn in the temple of God, the bosom of His Father.

This is that "one thing" which, here below, the Church asks of God: *Unum petii a Domino, hanc requiram, ut inhabitem in* DOMO DOMINI *per omnes dies vitæ meæ, ut contempler delectationem Domini, et protegar* TEMPLO EJUS: *quoniam abscondit me in* TABERNACULO SUO; *in die malorum meorum protexit me* IN ABSCONDITO TABERNACULI SUI.[1] According to St. Augustine, we must distinguish four things in these words of the Psalmist; the tabernacle of God, the secret of the tabernacle of God, the house of God and the temple of God.

The tabernacle of God is the Church militant, such as she is during her earthly pilgrimage; tents and pavilions being for the use of travellers, and soldiers engaged in warfare. Thus the Church is the tabernacle of God during this life, and will

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm lxii.

continue to be so while the world lasts; then persecutions, tears, lamentations, labours, will cease and death itself shall be destroyed; "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more."[1]

The secret of the tabernacle of God, is Jesus Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the life, holiness, and glory of the Church: "Our life is hidden with Christ in God."

The house of God is heaven, the eternal abode of His children. "Here is the tabernacle; there the house, where we shall for ever dwell."

Lastly, the temple is the bosom of God; for in God Himself we shall see God. It is in the bosom of God that, contemplating His infinite Essence, we shall enjoy every good, and be saved from every ill.

Temples are properly held as sacred places, whence flow, during this life, all true and spiritual benefits; inviolable asylums againt the insults of men, and thus types of that temple, immense, eternal, and infinitely adorable, wherein Jesus Christ with all His members will be withdrawn from all evil and suffering, in the vision of God. *Ut contempler delectationem Domini, et protegar templo ejus:* so it stands in the version used by

[1] Apoc. xxi. 4.

St. Augustine, in which we see, as he did, the proof of what has been advanced: *Contemplabor ad delectationem, et protegar ad salutem. Quam erit illa contemplatio perfecta, tam ista perfecta protectio; et quam illud perfectum gaudium contemplandi, tam perfecta etiam incorruptio sanitatis.* Filled with the vision of God we shall overflow with joy; hidden in the bosom of God as in a temple, we shall be in security. The asylum will be as inviolable as the vision will be perfect; and in proportion to the joy of the vision will be that of perfect and unfailing health. God will manifest Himself to us as our light, and hide us in His bosom as our salvation, housing us safely in His own temple, according to the opening words of the same Psalm: — "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"

Through the ills of this life we are separated from the mass of sinners, hidden in the mystical body of Christ, and in Jesus Christ Himself. This mercy which we receive in the tabernacle, and in the secret of the tabernacle, is a precious pledge of that which we hope for in the house and in the temple of God: *Qui tantum pignus dedit peregrinanti, non deseret pervenientem.* He who has given such a pledge to the pilgrim, will not abandon him when he has reached the goal.

Thus it is that the victim of God, brought into

His true temple, will be wholly set apart from all profane and sinful use. Faith and love have begun this separation on earth, causing us to take up our abode in the Church and in Jesus Christ; the vision of God and His perfect love will consummate it.

CHAPTER X.

HOW THE FOUR OTHER PARTS OF THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST WILL BE PERFECTED IN HEAVEN.

The oblation of the victim will also be brought to its perfection by charity. It was begun by Jesus Christ from the first moment of His divinely human life, when He said, "Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do thy will, O God; I have desired it, and thy law is within my heart:"[1] but only in glory is the will of God fully accomplished and His law engraven on the heart, not of Jesus Christ only but of all His members. This law is the law of love; it is charity which submits man's will to the will of God; charity which seeks the sanctification of His name; charity which establishes His reign; and by it the elect, with their Head, will offer themselves eternally to God to be consummated

[1] Psalm xxxix. 9.

in Him by glory, which constitutes the perfect oblation of the victim.

In the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law, especially the burnt-offerings, the immolation implied the destruction of the victim. In the immolation of Jesus Christ His human life was destroyed, in order that the body of sin might be destroyed in us also, the old man being crucified with Him. This body of sin is our concupiscence and mortality, both of which will be destroyed by the perfect victory of charity. This destruction must begin here; of the former, before death, by a sovereign love of God, and of the latter by means of death itself. But as charity does not usually, during this life, destroy all concupiscence in the soul, neither does death destroy the corruption of the body; corruption being itself a consequence of death; but the plenitude of charity in the soul and the effusion of glory in the body will consume all trace of corruption. For the body this will be the work of the resurrection; and for the soul, of charity; — suffering in purgatory, perfected and crowned in heaven.

The divine fire of the spirit of God will consume this holocaust. "For what is a holocaust?" says St. Augustine. "It is a victim entirely consumed, but consumed by the divine fire. Such is the sacrifice which the Church looks forward to offer in heaven, when she says, *Introibo in domum tuum*

in holocaustis. For here it is the body of Jesus Christ which speaks; the unity of Christ which says to God, *I will enter thy house with a burnt-offering*, for all that I am, it says, will be consumed by Thy fire, that nothing of myself may remain, but all be Thine. "

This will be the work of the resurrection when the corruptible body shall put on immortality; then the words of Scripture will be fulfilled, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. It is the victory of the divine fire, which; destroying and absorbing death itself, makes of us a holocaust to God. Then will nothing be left of mortality in the body, nor of sin in the soul. Every vestige of her mortal life will be consumed, that she herself may be wholly consumed in life immortal; not by the loss of what she is, but by the receiving of a new life which will deliver her from death for ever.

This is the holocaust which we shall offer in heaven. [1] This divine fire, by which Christ will be consumed as a burnt–offering, is no other than charity, shed abroad by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the faithful; and it is by the same power of the spirit of God that even our bodies will rise

[1] *Quid holocaustum? totum incensum sed igne divino.* (St. Augustine, in Psalm lxv.).

again, and death be destroyed by a perfect victim. "For," says St. Paul, "if the spirit which has raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of His spirit that dwelleth in you."

Here we can hardly distinguish between the burning of the victim and its immolation or destruction. For the destruction of concupiscence in the children of Adam is effected only by the plenitude of charity and glory, which, setting the victim on fire, makes of it a perfect holocaust. So the perfection of the one makes the perfection of the other; the plenitude of glory and the plenitude of charity are inseparable; charity consumes all concupiscence in the soul, and glory will consume the remains of mortality and corruption, even in the body.

Lastly, the communion of the sacrifice is made perfect and consummated in glory, by the same perfect charity. It is by charity we begin to communicate in Jesus Christ in this life, in His body, in His spirit, in His holiness, in His justice; and by charity consummated in heaven we communicate perfectly in God and in Jesus Christ. It is charity which makes us here one body with Jesus Christ, through the Eucharistic communion, that we may be one spirit with God: *qui adhaerit*

Deo unus spiritus est; and in heaven perfect charity, by perfecting the union of the members with the Head in the perfect body of Christ, will also unite us perfectly to God; it will make us enter into His bosom and consummate us in His unity, and by it He will dwell in our souls in a manner incomparably fuller und more intimate than has been experienced by the greatest saints in this life.

Then our Lord's promise will be fulfilled in all its perfection: "If a man love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him; and we will come to him and make our abode with him."[1] Then, too, will be fulfilled that for which Jesus Christ prayed on the eve of his sacrifice: "Father, I desire that where I am they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me; that they may see my glory which thou hast given me."[2]

The Son dwells in the bosom of the Father; in the bosom of the Father He receives and possesses His glory, and there He communicates it to His members; it is in the bosom of the Father that they contemplate it, and there, consequently, that He desires they may be with Him.

[1] St. John xiv. 13.
[2] St. John xvii. 24.

The following is St. Augustine's explanation of these words: I desire that they may be with Me where I am. "We shall be in the Father with Jesus Christ, but He is there after His manner, and we shall be there after ours. For if that which contains spiritual things may be called a place, and a things finds its place wherever it is, the eternal place of Jesus Christ is where His Father has ever been, and the place of the Father is His Son: 'For,' He says, 'I am in the Father and the Father in me;' and again, in the same prayer: 'As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee.' They are Themselves our place, as He says, *that they may be one in us;* and we also are ourselves the place of God.[1] Now, that we should be in the bosom of God and He in us for eternity, this is begun here in Jesus Christ when we receive Him into our bosom and are nourished by Him; there God will be in us in such a manner that we shall be satisfied. *Nam cibus ille cordis est* — He is the nourishment of the heart."[2]

For when we are united to God we shall not be left without food and drink; God Himself will be our nourishment; the eternal food which

[1] St. Augustine, tr. 3, supr. Jo. 1.
[2] St. Augustine, in Psalm xxi.

alone fully satisfies the heart; unfailing and inexhaustible.[1]

We shall live eternally by the Divine Essence and the eternal truth. Love which will be the very source of life and light, is the means through which we shall receive it, and we shall be inebriated with the abundance of our God and the torrents of His delights: for with Him is the fountain of life, and in His light we shall see light[2] *quoniam apud te est fons vitae et in lumine tuo videbimus lumen.*

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm l.
[2] Psalm xxxv.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE SACRIFICE OF ETERNAL PRAISE, WHOSE SOURCE IS THE PLENITUDE OF CHARITY.

The plenitude of light, truth, and life, which is God Himself, will be the source of that praise which the mystical body of Jesus Christ, with its Head, will render eternally to God.[1] Praise, according to the admirable definition of St. Augustine, is nothing else than the overflow of this fulness of God, *laus Domini est eructatio saturitatis illius;*[2] and the saturation being continual, inasmuch as we shall never cease to love God, the praise will never have an end. "For in this eternal rest of the spirit and the body, which constitute the beatitude of the saints, we shall repose in God, and we shall see God. We shall see Him, we shall love Him and we shall praise Him. This, it is, which at the end of the ages will never have

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm cx.
[2] St. Augustine, in Psalm xxi.

an end. He Whom we shall see for ever, love without satiety, and praise without weariness, will be Himself the end of our prayers, the realization of all our desires. He will be all that the human heart can wish for; life, health, joy, riches, glory, honour, peace; in a word, every good; "that God may be all in all."[1]

How great will be that happiness which will neither be crossed by any ill nor want any good; where there will be no other occupation than that of singing the praises of God, who will be all in all! Then all our bodily organs, now destined to the necessary functions of life, will be free to join in the chorus of praise: and beholding the harmony of all the physical powers now hidden from us, with an infinity of other admirable things, we shall be incited by a holy ardour to sing aloud the praises of the great Creator. "Blessed, O Lord, are those who shall dwell in Thy house, for they shall praise thee for ever and ever! It will be the occupation of leisure; the labour of repose, the care of those who are free from care."[2] This unending praise, this new canticle which will be the sole occupation of the saints during the eternal sacrifice,[3] will be the fruit of the peace of heaven,

[1] St. Augustine, *De Civit. Dei*, cap. ult.
[2] St. Augustine, in Psalm cx.
[3] St. Augustine, in Psalm cxlvi.

and of the perfect unity of the body of Christ; the inseparable association of all its parts, bound together by charity, without fear lest the bond should be broken or the members divided.[1] There we shall praise Him, as one body in one Christ, for God alone. Charity itself will praise God, and praise Him with the choirs of the elect, with all that they are and will for ever be in heaven.

This praise will no longer be a mere service of the lips; it will come from the depth of the soul, because we shall love God with all the strength of our being; — rooted in charity, and charity perfectly rooted in us.

This is the praise we shall sing in heaven, the sacrifice we shall offer there. The sacrifice God asks of us now, in order that we may be worthy to offer Him a heavenly and eternal one, is the sacrifice of a contrite heart; for if penance is needful for the sinner who would prepare himself for the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Communion, how much more necessary is it for those who would enter into this adorable temple, and draw near to this sublime invisible altar on which the eternal sacrifice of divine praise is offered in the fire of divine and everlasting charity?

All the religion of earth is a preparation for

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm clvi.

that of heaven. The Eucharistic Sacrifice and Communion, greatest and holiest of our mysteries, are but the means intended to fit us for offering the holocaust of the Church of the saints. With what purity ought we not to approach the visible altar, to sacrifice and communicate in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under visible signs!

It is, according to the fathers, an unworthy reception to receive before we have, by penance, expiated sins that kill the soul. Formerly, until the prescribed measure of penance had been fulfilled, penitents were not allowed to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass; not even at the oblation of the bread and wine; but having heard the word of God, and received the usual imposition of hands, they were dismissed, the deacon saying in a loud voice, *Exite, qui in poenitentia estis* — "Ye who are in penance, depart." In our days the Church shows indulgence towards the greatest sinners: provided they are not excommunicated she allows them to be present at the holy mysteries, and even desires they should be there; assuming that they come with at least some disposition towards conversion and a return to God.

But towards those who would enter heaven and take part in the great sacrifice of eternity, no such indulgence is granted. It is a law

without exception that nothing defiled can enter there. He who gains admitance into the temple of the heavenly sacrifice must have paid all that he owes to the divine justice; he must have purified himself from the smallest stains, which the holiest contract on earth. Hence the Council of Trent does not only say that the whole life of a sinner should be a continual penance, but the whole life of a Christian; in order to repair, preserve, and increase the innocence and purity demanded by the sacrifice and communion of the holy and adorable Eucharist.

The same Council adds: "That Christians may bear in mind the infinite majesty and extraordinary love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given His life, worthy of sovereign love, for the price of our salvation and His flesh for the nourishment of our souls; let them conceive a faith so firm and unalterable, and such lively sentiments of love, devotion and reverence, for the sacred mystery of His Body and Blood, that they may often receive thus super-substantial bread, which is the true life of their souls and perpetual health of their hearts. Fortified by the Bread which is the source of all our strength, they will be able to pass from this miserable life in which they are strangers and pilgrims, to their heavenly country; there to eat, without veil, this

same bread of angels which is now their nourishment under the sacred and mysterious veils of the Eucharist." This is what we have to prepare for during life by sacrifice and penance.

Yes, Lord! The humble and contrite heart is now the sacrifice which Thou wilt not refuse; but this contrite and humble heart is the work of Thy grace, and the effect of Thy mercy: a gift which, by a just but inscrutable judgment, Thou dost not give to all, and which Thou bestowest on whom Thou pleasest, by a will and benevolence wholly gratuitous. We desire it; we ask for it, O Lord! we hope for it, and expect it of Thy goodness.

This is the foundation upon which the edifice of our salvation and perfection in charity is to be raised, but the foundation is the work of Thy hand. Lay it in us, O Lord! Raise in our hearts the edifice of charity upon the foundation of humble faith and a firm hope in Thy grace; that we may become Thy kingdom even in this life; *Regnum Dei intra vos est;* and that Thou mayest be our Jerusalem in eternity. There we shall offer Thee a sacrifice which will wholly please Thee; the great sacrifice of perfect justice and charity consummated. There Thou wilt receive the oblation, one and eternal, of the full, entire, and perfected body of Thy Son. This divine holocaust will be wholly set on fire, not in a temple of stone, but in the temple

of Thy bosom; not on a figurative or ministerial altar, but on Thine own altar, which is Thy Son; not by a profane or strange fire, but by the sacred fire of Thy spirit.

"May we all burn with this divine fire and be consumed by its heat. What is this heat but that of which it is said, 'No man can hide himself from His heat?' — that which the apostle recommends saying, Be fervent in spirit. Let not our souls alone burn with this fire of divine wisdom, but our bodies also, that they may become worthy to be clothed with immortality. May the holocaust be so consumed and sacrificed for God that death itself may be absorbed and swallowed up in victory."[1]

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm l.

THE END.

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